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MOVING TO THE MUSIC:
The effects of using Drama-in-Education activities
with two Fourth Grade Music Classes

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study documents the observed and reported experiences of an elementary general music teacher's use of Drama-in-Education activities with two fourth grade classes during the 2005-06 school year. The setting of this study takes place in an urban public school in Pennsylvania.

In this study, the author explores the importance of using Drama-in-Education activities with all students and discusses key factors that are essential when using it in the classroom. She also points out that, while drama has been used in various other fields of study, it has not been often used in a music class setting.

Throughout the study, the author documents the implementation of several Drama-in-Education activities and their usefulness in her music class. She also includes her insights that were made, through the course of the study, to improve upon the activities that were originally intended, so as to better meet the students' needs.

The study suggests that using Drama-in-Education activities in a music class will not only improve a student's ability to gain insights into the meaning of a piece of music, it also has the potential to dramatically improve their relation to other classmates, and the teacher, in a positive way.

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INTRODUCTION

Study Particulars

This study takes place in an urban school in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. The school is made up of approximately 85% Latino, 5% African American, 2% Asian, 2% white, and 6% other backgrounds. Out of the entire student body, 95% of the student body received free or reduced lunch.

The students in the two fourth grade classes that I studied ranged in ages from nine to eleven, were both male and female and included a vast array of ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Additionally, each class was made up of varying ability levels and was formed by their third grade teachers. Ms. Fine's class had 26 students and Mrs. Neff's class had 24 students, which brings the total number of students involved in this study to 50.

The research time period of the study was from September 7th, 2005 until December 16th, 2005. Each group had music class approximately once a week for 45 minutes. In total, I saw each class 13 times.

The Classes involved with this study.

Ms. Fine's class

Throughout this study there were between 24 and 26 students enrolled in this class. In general, 85% of the students in this class received special education services in various subjects while the rest of were of normal or gifted intelligences. I was not aware of this fact until after I was about one third into my study. It was explained to me during an informal interview with Ms. Fine.

Mrs. Neff's class

In this class, the student enrollment did not change and remained at 26. In this class 90% of the students were of average intelligence. The other 10% of the student body consisted of students who received special education services in various subjects.

In both classes, there were students that received ESL services. Additionally both classes conducted daily class meetings where students worked on communication skills as well as classroom community building skills.

Researcher Stance

In today's world, where the television is always on and the latest home video game system is all the rage, I believe that today's youths have lost touch with their sense of imagination. When I have asked students to pretend, to imagine that they are someone or someplace else, their eyes reflect question marks. It appears to me as though the continual visual bombardment via the television or movie screen has fogged the imaginative side of their brain. Unlike many students, my childhood was a bit different.

My Interest in Make Believe

From the time I was little, until about my eighth grade year, I can remember playing make believe games with my brother. When we were really young, we would go outside in the woods in our back yard and play on an old dead pine tree. On this skeleton of a tree, we would pretend and act out a multitude of scenarios from living on a space ship to being on a fighter jet in a battle with the enemy or even sailing the seas on a pirate ship looking for treasure. When the weather would not cooperate, we would make a cave out of a sheet and toy boxes in our room and go on other imaginative journeys. We loved to pretend, and we had a blast doing it. We entered into a realm where we could make an alternate reality and could control it in our own way with **no parents telling us what we could and could not do**. We learned about hardship, struggle, the wonderful feeling of victory and simply the joy of playing. Also, it was only in those times that my brother and I didn't fight like archenemies, which seemed to happen at many other times.

As the years in school came and went, I continued to use my imagination at home, creating skits to songs and creating my own mental revisions to movies that I saw. I also learned to play the flute and joined the band at school. I really enjoyed marching band in high school because we did field shows that required us to move around on the football field to the music we played. To me it was fascinating because we were, in a way, doing what I had done all along: come up with moves to music. It was just on a different level now. The high point at this time was when I got to be one of two drum majors and got to lead the entire band.

After heading to college to study music education, graduating, and getting a job in a middle school, I had my first real taste of acting itself and acting within the frame of a scripted musical. I worked with the other music teacher in the building on both the play and musical that year. She taught me about blocking, stage directions and choreography as we worked on each in play production. It was hard work but it was so much fun taking that journey with her and the students involved.

When I look back on this experience I now understand why, as a teacher in the elementary school venue, I always have the students put on concerts with inter-linking speaking parts and in-depth motions to each song we sing. In recent years I have gone so far as to create my own mini musicals for the fifth grade show. I selected the songs and created the speaking parts and motions for all the participants. While I did these kinds of things for the concerts in my school, I never thought about using drama in my classroom. I

just didn't know how I could combine the two in a way that would have the students both have fun and learn the required music curriculum.

The Class of Enlightenment

My infatuation with drama and music was heightened after taking a graduate course entitled Drama in Education in which we were introduced to dozens of techniques. Our professor's purpose for sharing these activities with us was to show us that indeed drama could be used to enhance what we were doing with the students in our classes already. She succeeded in doing this by allowing the class of graduate students to experience these class drama exercises first hand. At the end of this class I reflected on what we had done. I realized that I entered that course knowing no one and left feeling as though I had known them and grown to trust them more than some of the colleagues I had known for years. What really bewildered me about this was the fact that it only took a concentrated time together in a mutually supportive environment to feel that way.

In addition to feeling such a sense of community with the students in this class, I also was able to explore the ways in which I could use various Drama-in-Education activities in my own arena of teaching: music class. I went from thinking that drama could not be done in my room, to wondering why I had not tried to use it in my music room from day one. I left that class with new lesson plans as well as a sense of confidence in the fact that Drama-in-Education strategies would be able to help my students on a multitude levels if and when I chose to implement them.

Last year, I began to use drama in all of my classes to help introduce the students to the rules in the music room. I had students come up with motions to go with the rule and I had them act it out in front of their classmates. It went well and I was pleased. In later months, I tried at other times to use drama in class. These attempts were positive to a point, but I realized that my students had difficulty using their imaginations when it came to thinking about a song's meaning or the story a song had to tell. Additionally, they had a difficult time expressing their thoughts to one another without fear of embarrassment.

The Decision / Realization

Knowing that I would soon be writing a master's degree thesis and researching my own practice, I began thinking that using drama in my class would be interesting to research. It was then, after much thought and revision that I came up with a question. *How would the use of drama in my music classroom affect the students in terms of classroom dynamics/community and in their comprehension of any musical piece's meaning?* The students in my building often have difficulty getting along with each other and they seem to have few opportunities to think imaginatively at school. By using various drama-in-education activities with fourth grade music students, I hoped to determine how these types of activities would affect their tolerance, teamwork and compassion of their classmates' ideas. I also felt that this question would also reveal in what ways Drama-in-Education activities influenced students' understanding of what message a piece of music is trying to convey.

Do You *Trust Me*?

When doing drama with students or anyone, it is imperative that the students have trust in you and in one another. It is also important that they know their peers will not ridicule their statements and actions in the room. As G. Barnfield (1968) states, "once the environment in the room is set, then growth can begin." Though the book written by Barnfield is over 35 years old, it is important to mention because it proves that drama strategies have been used in regular classroom settings for many years. This document also justifies the need for further exploration of the effects of Drama-in-Education activities.

Realizing that the third graders, now fourth graders, had known me as their music teacher since kindergarten, I knew that they trusted me almost completely. I had them perform daily in music class as well as in front of their parents, friends, and the entire school body for four years. Due to the level of trust, which had grown between us, I believe that they were thirsting for some new way to learn. I believe that using drama as a learning medium was that new device. The use of drama in my music class has helped the students to grow into a trusting community of learners without fear or ridicule. It is my belief additionally, with the use of Drama-in-Education activities, they were also provided opportunities to deepen their understanding of any musical piece through physical exploration of it in various forms. Doing so allowed them to make use of their imaginations that, before the study began, had been put on a high shelf in the closet of their minds. I believe that by me

taking part in their discovery, I too have deepened my own understanding of musical pieces as well as experienced a greater sense of community with these two fourth grade classes.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Making the Plan...

I knew, from conducting other smaller scale studies, that I would need to keep a field log. This log would contain information about what actually happened in class, what my feelings were regarding those events, and statements that the students had made each day in class.

In addition to the field log, I planned to collect other data from the students. One of these pieces of data was in the form of mini in-class reflections about what had occurred in class that day. I felt beginning, middle, and end surveys were necessary in order to record the students' feelings regarding the events that were happening in class. Additionally, the students were to be given evaluations at the same three points where they were to construct a story based on a piece of music. It was my hope that by using the same piece of music all three times, the students' stories would show their progress and growth (or lack of growth) as we went through the semester. I also wanted to conduct group interviews with each of the fourth grade classes at the beginning, middle, and end with hopes of gaining a new perspective on their opinions about class. I knew that some of the students would not be able to express themselves well on paper and a chance to verbally express their opinions would be welcomed.

Interviewing the classroom teachers was also considered because I thought that they would be able to provide bits of insight as to the inner

workings of their class because they dealt with the students on a daily basis, compared to my weekly interactions with them.

Out of the many things that I had intended to do, the one I was most excited about trying was video taping the students' performances in class. What made me want to do this takes me back to a time in my youth when my family purchased our first home video camera. I loved seeing myself on TV, just like a famous person. As I got older and watched younger tapings of myself, I could see how I aged mentally as well as physically. In thinking about my own past joy of seeing myself on the television, I figured that by video taping the students' performances at three separate times during the study, the students would be able to physically see their growth throughout the semester. Additionally, they would have the opportunity to reflect on what they saw either in writing or in a group discussion session. The use of the video was for the students and me to reflect upon ONLY. In keeping with being a trustworthy teacher action researcher, the video was never to be viewed by anyone outside of the classroom, and was to be destroyed after the study was finished.

To anyone reading this, it looks like lots of work and that mountains of data would be collected. They would be correct in their thinking, but varied forms of data collection are necessary if a person wishes to have a research study that actually captures the aspects of all parties involved in the study from multiple points of view, which is also known as triangulation. In her book, *On Writing Qualitative Research (2004)*, Margot Ely quotes Guba and

Lincoln (1985) stating that triangulation is “validating findings by comparing data collected by a variety of methods, or from a variety of sources, or by a variety of researchers.” Indeed Guba and Lincoln are correct but I attest that my intended methods of data collection are from more than three different perspectives, they are from multiple ones, which make Ely’s quotation of Laurel Richardson’s (1994) statement, that researchers “crystallize”, a more fitting metaphor. In this statement she quotes Laurel as saying that in research “there are more than three sides from which to approach the world” (2004). Going on, “her (Laurel’s) metaphor of the crystal... reflects the complex, partial and multi perspectives that refract meaning for and from the reader. (The crystal)...combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi-dimensionalities, and angles of approach.” When approaching research in this way, I believed it necessary to have a multi faceted approach.

Dreams and Reality!

While all of my intentions were great, they were in a sense, an ideal look at what I had wanted to do. Had I not had a major turn of events regarding my teaching environment this past year, I would have been able to do most all of what I had initially intended to do.

At the end of my year prior to my study, I was informed (by my principal) that I would be teaching music on a cart. Immediately, I panicked. What was I going to do now? More importantly, since I had never done it before, how does one go about teaching music on a cart? Before this had

occurred, I had already planned out what new things my study in drama-in-education activities I would introduce into my fourth grade music classes. Now, everything about my study was temporarily in limbo while I figured out how music class would be run in a more technical/logistical sense.

In the end, I never really had everything perfectly planned out at the start of the New Year, but we ran with what we had and made adjustments as needed regarding regular music class events and the new dramatic parts. I managed to collect the data in my study in the ways that I had initially intended with a few minor adjustments here or there.

The Field Log

My field log was set up in a clear way that enabled me to look back later with great ease. Every line on each page was sequentially numbered and on the right was a large margin (Ely et al., 2004) so that later I could, and did, efficiently and neatly code and analyze the events in my field log (Bogdon & Bilken, 1998). (*See Appendix J*)

The first thing that was entered into my log book was the signed consent forms from my principal and assistant principal, the two classroom teachers, and all students involved (Arhar, Holly & Kasten, 2001). That was followed with the two lists of pseudonyms that the students and their teachers were given in order to maintain confidentiality throughout the research and written presentation of the study (Arhar, Holly & Kasten, 2001).

What followed next were the richly detailed journal entries, as recorded by myself, which contained a detailed description of what was to be

accomplished in each class period (Drama-in-Education activities and other routine music class components) and a record of what actually was done within each class. In these entries, I was sure to capture as much student dialogue as possible as well as my own personal feelings regarding the day's events. In order to make my opinions separate from the actual occurrences, I placed my observer opinions in brackets (Ely et al., 2004). Lastly, each entry was dated, printed, given a side tab label with the date and theme, hole-punched, and placed in the field log binder to satisfy my own personal organizational needs.

Student Work

As intended, I collected various amounts of written student work in the form of student reflection sheets, surveys and assessments. The survey/assessment sheet and the reflection sheet were to stay the same throughout the study (*see Appendices E & F*). However, after using both sheets with moderate success, it became apparent that the students could better express themselves if the wording on the papers was revised. Therefore, new survey/assessment sheets were made (*see Appendices G, H & I*).

The student survey/assessment sheet was actually used at the beginning and middle of the study. In the survey part, the students were asked to complete a series of questions that pertained to their feelings about their classmates and certain particulars of music class. For the assessment part of the sheet (located on the bottom/back), students listened to a four-minute excerpt of the *1812 Overture*, by Tchaikovsky, and were to use pictures and

words to create a story based on what they heard. Sadly, the survey/assessment evaluation was not used at the end like I had wanted because I did not get a full class period at the end of the study (due to two early dismissals and a surprise assembly). There was no time in my schedule to make up the lost class periods. With each class, a formal discussion/free write session was held after our viewing of the snap shot video (see “~~video~~ camera photography” below).

In addition to the Survey/Assessment sheet, the students completed several written reflection sheets that allowed them to write about what had occurred in class that day. Though many times the students were given the formal response sheet, there were times when the students were asked to simply take out a blank sheet of notebook paper and write me a letter about their feelings regarding class that day.

The students’ pieces of written work were also serially placed in my field log. It should be noted though, that these pieces were copies, as the originals were returned to the students.

Interviews

Getting a verbal record of how both students and classroom teachers felt about the study proved to be a bit challenging, as I had no formal and private place to conduct interviews. Many times, the interviews that were done were informal and took place in the hallway, during staff breakfast club or in two minutes before class ended. However, I did manage to conduct two formal interviews with the students involved with the study.

Regardless of the difficulty, I conversed with the students and teachers at various points (beginning, middle and end) in the data gathering part of the study. After each interview had ended, I wrote down what questions were asked as well as the answers that were given. These documents too were dated, given a side tab and placed in my field log sequentially with the other recorded data.

~~Video~~ Camera Photography

Out of the various forms of data collection, this one was the one that had changed the most. As mentioned previously, I was told that I would be teaching music on a cart after I had already planned my methods of data collection for my study. At the beginning of the year, I had still intended to use the video camera in the classrooms. To put it simply, it did not work. I ran into many problems, here were some of them:

1. Other people had the video camera in the building and did not sign it out.
2. When I could get the video camera, the tripod was broken.
3. I didn't have the time before class to set up the camera in the room so that the students would not realize that it was there.
4. In the beginning of the year I was often running back to my office to get the things that I had forgotten for class that day. This is usually a problem for a teacher who is new to the class-on-a-cart experience (as explained to me by other classless cart veterans).

After several attempts to do this had failed, I decided that a new approach to the visual documentation had to be made. In the beginning of the year, I had taken a class on making a slide show with digital pictures using the i-Movie function on my computer. After getting over the fact that I could not video them, I decided that using still shot photography would do just fine. In class, while they were working through the various Drama-in-Education activities, I took their pictures with a digital camera. Then I took those pictures and created an I-Movie for them to see. Though it was not a moving picture the students still got to see themselves on screen and were eager to reflect upon it verbally and in writing. This video was only used for reflection purposes and was never showed to anyone not involved with the study.

Despite my best efforts, everything that I had wanted to do did not get utilized. I was fine with this fact because, when I looked back at the various forms of data that I *did* collect, they painted a clear multi-faceted picture of what had happened in class. Collecting the data in this “Crystal shaped” way, enabled my findings to be more accurate and not biased to one specific way (Ely et. al.2004).

DRAMA-IN-EDUCATION ACTIVITIES USED

Listed below are the several activities that I used in both fourth grade general music classes, as well as brief descriptions of them. These activities, which have been listed in the approximate order in which we explored them, were chosen for their non-specific nature, meaning that they have the potential to be used in almost any type of class.

Walk, Walk, Lightbulb

is a warm-up activity that was renamed by my drama teacher Anne Finlay. This is also called **Still Image** (Needlands & Goode, 2003). In this activity the students begin by walking around the room, getting comfortable for movement/drama in the space that is present. The instructor begins to get the students minds actively thinking about what will be taught that day by calling out words that deal with the subject matter from the impending lesson. When the instructor calls out the word or phrase, the students are to freeze into a position thereby physically interpreting the word spoken by the instructor. This frozen position is also known as Tableau (described below). After a small amount of time holding that position the instructor says “release” to enable the students to walk again. The instructor will do this sequence several times before ending the activity. Additionally, the instructor can call out the same word or phrase more than once. This requires the students to recall their initial placement in the room as well as how they interpreted the word before. Lastly the instructor can have students be the

caller, which would be excellent when using this game as a review of a lesson or unit.

Tableau

is an activity that can take place while doing another drama activity. While doing this Drama-in-Education activity, students have the opportunity to physically interpret their own understanding of a concept being explored in class. I explained this idea to my students by telling that a Tableau image is like a snap shot; A still image what does not move. Additionally, the students have the chance to see how their classmates have physically interpreted the concept in a different way. As Downey (2005) states “(When using Tableau) it invites even the most verbally shy students to visually and kinesthetically contribute to the exploration of important themes.” When doing this activity, it is also important to note that the facilitator is not to “lead the students to a ‘right’ answer, but that a variety of perspectives be encouraged” (Downey (2005)

Dramatic Interpretation

is an activity that allows students to, in groups or individually, physically interpret (act out) what they read or hear. Speaking while moving is accepted, though not necessary or encouraged. Needlands and Goode, (2003) refer to this idea as **Mimed Activity**.

In my class, students had the opportunity to act out what a piece of music made them think of. Since interpretation is subjective, there was no

correct answer because all of their attempts at physical interpretation were genuine.

In-Role

is an activity that takes place when a teacher, student, or group of students assume the role of a character they encounter when reading or listening to a story that is either true or fiction. The students can either dramatically become these characters in an improvised play, or they can write compositions as that character in the story. Allowing students to be in-the role of a character gives them the chance to better understand a character's position and point of view regarding whatever dilemma being presented in the story.

Though I had initially intended to have the students do this activity on many levels, time and the weather would not cooperate. The main experience that we had with this technique was when I took the role of Francis Scott Key so we could "Hot Seat" him, as described below. Swartz (1995) states that "when a teacher works in role, she adopts a set of attitudes to work with the students but while acting skills are not necessary, the teacher must alter his or her status in the classroom to help students explore issues...thoughts and feelings as they work in a fictional context" (p.103). If the teacher's new role is believable, the students will gain insight into the character's personality and life.

Hot Seating

is a dramatic activity described by Needlands and Goode (2003) as when a group, working as themselves, or in role, has the opportunity to question or interview a person or group who assumes the role of a character from history or a story. This person being questioned, may be released from their role after the questioning is finished. The role player can be the teacher, a guest educator, or a student from class. The purpose of doing this is to allow student to have a more personal connection to the people/material they are learning about. Needlands and Goode (2003) state, that Hot Seating gives the students “insights into relationships between attitudes and events, and how events affect attitudes.”(p. 32) I used this method when we were studying our National anthem; the students hot seated Francis Scott Key (played by myself).

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Tell me and I may listen, show me and I will see, involve me and I will understand.” --Chinese proverb

The idea of using drama as a teaching method is not a new thing. It has been tested and successfully used as a tool for learning in various core subjects such as science, social studies and English (Robbins, 2005). Drama has also been successfully used in creating a closer classroom community (DelBlaze, 2005). In addition to using it in multiple venues, drama has also been used to teach students with varying levels of abilities and backgrounds. Some of these different groups of students include mentally delayed students, students of average and gifted intelligence levels, second language learners, pregnant teens/teen mothers, and those children who come from broken homes or bad backgrounds (Nelson, 1993)(Lunday, 2005)(Guinsburg, 1991)(Asmuth, 1978).

Drama in the classroom versus Drama for the Theatre

As Ping-Yun Sun (2003) states, “there are many names that are used for drama in the classroom. Some of these terms are: Creative Drama, Creative Dramatics, Developmental Drama, Process Drama, Educational Drama, Improvisational Drama, Improvisation, Informal Drama, Classroom Drama, and Drama-in-Education”(¶1). In order to maintain clarity in this review of literature, drama in the classroom will be referred to as Drama-in-Education.

Using Drama-in-Education differs from Theatre Drama in various ways. The most obvious lies in the intended outcomes of the two. As Gustav

Weltsek (2005) states, process drama (a.k.a. Drama-in-Education) focuses on the student's understanding of text, rather than for play production, and nothing occurs without the participants' input. Weltsek further clarifies the difference between the two by stating that, "in process drama, student reflection is important, not the upcoming production and the teacher" and student body "share equal places in the development, analysis, and production of the drama" (p. 76).

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)(1998) defines Classroom Drama as " an activity in which students invent and enact dramatic situations for themselves rather than for an outside audience." Additionally, the NCTE states that this drama is spontaneous as far as its creation and performance.

More simply, in using Drama-in-Education activities in class, students may be asked to "imagine and behave as if they were other than themselves in some other place at another time" (Neelands, J. & Goode, T., 1990 p.1). Johnson (1998) describes Creative Dramatics as, "a form of imaginative play that helps students learn (that) uses no written dialogue, (which makes) it different from performing a play"(p.2). Ping-Yun Sun (2003) further clarifies the difference by saying that "the focus (of using drama in the classroom) should be shifted from learning (the) drama to emphasizing the process of learning through (using the) drama" (§ 2). This process of learning as a result of Drama-in-Education activities means that, "students use and examine their

present knowledge (of the specific subject matter) in order to induce new knowledge”(Robbins, 1988 ¶3).

I will end this dissertation of various authors’ definitions of Drama-in-Education by concluding with my own personal favorite by Perry (2005) who asserts that it is:

“ a dramatic classroom that uses performance as a tool to stretch student’s thinking and creativity and digs deeper into the text by explaining and exploring ideas and concepts is an effective one (class) from which all students can benefit” (p.120).

It is clear that student discovery, exploration and educational growth are at the heart of Drama-in-Education activities.

The Positives: Why use Drama in the classroom?

According to Robbins (1988), much of the research on drama in the classroom has been done at the primary level. At that time, it was found that drama improved many things like reading comprehension, persuasive writing, self-concepts and attitudes towards others (Robbins, 1998). Since 1988, various other educators have tested Drama-in-Education activities and found many additional positive outcomes.(Lundy, 2005)(Johnson, 1998)(DelBlaze, 2005).

In General

Using dramatics in the classroom is important for both students and teacher. Students’ powers of emotion and imagination are much more developed than their reasoning powers, which are different than adults, who

rely on reason and knowledge (Johnson, 1998). Using drama in the classroom has benefits that extend beyond comprehending the material being taught. Dramatic activities in the classroom pair up reason and knowledge with play, imagination and improvisation (Yun Sun, 2003). Larry Swartz (1995) states, incorporating drama and dramatic themes into a classroom “provides a hook in the classroom for making connections to the content being studied and also it provides a venue for making connections with fellow class members” (p.9). Johnson (1998) adds to Swartz’s statement by saying that it forces students to “think out loud, organize and synthesize information, interpret ideas, create new ideas and interact cooperatively with others” while being enjoyable and fun (p.2).

The Multiple Intelligences, and New Learning tool / Evaluation technique

The Multiple Intelligences theory of Howard Gardner states that every person is smart in several ways, and if a teacher allows her students to experience knowledge in some of these, all students will be given the chance to express themselves in a way that is most comfortable to them (Silver, Strong,& Perini, 2000). In doing this, the teacher will also allow her students to “find hidden talents and callings and experience the joys of success”(p 3).

Drama-in-Education activities are extremely effective learning tools because they “help develop students’ powers of insight, observation, self-understanding, and empathy” (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2000 p. 60). If a teacher uses dramatic exercises in the classroom, she is allowing the students

to work with all of their intelligences, most notably, their spatial intelligence as well as their bodily/kinesthetic intelligence. Additionally, teaching with the multiple intelligences in mind (ie. using dramatic activities) will create learning diversity within the classroom and it can inspire and empower students to reach their fullest potentials (Silver, Strong, & Perini, 2000). Therefore, it can be said that the students, by doing Drama-in-Education activities help students work on social and informational learning all at once.

In using dramatics in class the teacher not only has gained a learning tool for her students, she also has acquired an effective medium for assessment. This belief of student engagement has been mentioned by Alfie Kohn in his book *The Case Against Standardized Testing* (2002), when he was speaking about his opposition to how greatly the public educational system values standardized tests as a measuring tool for authentic learning. Mr. Kohn believes that “Performance assessments are opportunities for students to demonstrate their proficiency by *doing* something” (p.42). If a student cannot demonstrate what they learned in ways other than in writing than perhaps she does not completely understand the new knowledge.

Student Connections to Curriculum Material

According to Perry (2005), authentic drama assignments capture the students’ ability to understand complex concepts and use them in multiple contexts. Such is the case in a 2002 study conducted by Creech and Bhavanagri.

Creech and Bhavanagri (2002) studied a first grade class exposed to the elements of a story and story writing through the use of drama activities (2002). Before the students were exposed to the drama exercises, a baseline assessment, of their understanding of story elements was administered. In this assessment the students were asked to write a story based on a picture of a clown. After their assessment, the teacher and drama specialist evaluated the responses and formed the lessons accordingly. The students then went through a five-week unit that was focused on teaching story elements through dramatic exercises. The teacher and drama specialist worked together in the classroom with the students and revised, deleted or added new exercises as necessary. At the end of the five week period the students were given an end assessment, which was the same assignment as the initial baseline assessment. In addition to the story writing, the students were also interviewed in a group setting. When asked what they learned through the drama moments, they stated that the experience was fun and that they liked acting out things that were related to writing. It was clear that through drama the students story creation skills were enhanced. They were able to take the perspective of a character in a story and use it to create a richer story.

The idea of using Drama-in-Education activities is not just limited to the primary grades. According to Quinn (2005), using drama with older students helps them to become good readers who “visualize stories in their minds; hear characters’ voices and see their gestures” (p.32).

In 2005, DelBlase recorded the account of two teachers who used drama to fully engage their students in Shakespeare plays and a story about the Holocaust. After discussing the story to be studied, the teacher had the students do frozen images, called Tableau. It was later stated that in doing so, the students were more willing to try and interpret what they read. The exercise with Tableau also helped the students to see the “relevance and specificity of the language” (p. 31). After a teacher facilitated whole class discussion of what had been done, the instructor told the students to close their eyes and see the images they created in their “mind’s eye.” Afterward, she read the scene or chapter while their eyes were closed. At the end of the section, the students were asked to draw a picture of what the words made them see and later had them explain their drawings to the rest of the class. Before the students left class for the day, they were to journal about their thoughts regarding what had happened. DelBlase concluded that indeed the students had made deeper connections with the material being studied because the process that was done “invited the students into the text without having them completely understanding every part of it.” Lastly she stated that the entire process “provided the students with strong motivation to learn and discover while it supported learning elements of fiction, developing literacy strategies and seeing the world and world events from different points of view” (p. 32).

The Social Aspect, building community, confidence, and character

While there are many ways students have experienced factual learning through dramatics, the use of drama in the classroom has also had positive effects in students socially and personally (Yee Sam, 1990). After interviewing and watching the students, many researchers have noted that the students grew as people (Nelson, 1993)(Landy, 2005). They became more trusting of their classmates and enhanced their own imaginations and creativity (Creech & Bhavanagri, 2002). Specifically, “As a group comes to know and rely upon each other, a group intelligence develops that enables some brilliant moments of ensemble play (Drama)”(Kriete, 2002, p.85). It is in these moments that the “class pulls off something together that is clearly more than the sum of their individual efforts”(Kriete 2002, p.85). Students are, as DelBlase (2005) states, “getting out from their desks, engaging in mutual discovery and figuring out together ‘what it all means’”(p.30)

Despite the fact that using drama exercises in the classroom has the potential to benefit any one who takes part, “children from low socioeconomic families are far more likely to benefit (more) from drama instruction than students from average populations” (Podlozny, 2000, p. 252). In this statement age is not an issue, as the study done by the Living Theater Company, based in Washington D.C. suggests. This study involved teen mothers from rough parts of the city. The focus of the study are ideas of creating trust, a more acute imaginations, a creative sense and an increased sense of self confidence among these scared young ladies were important

(Nelson 1993). Specifically, this group wanted to see if the use of dramatic activities would help these young ladies develop personal qualities that are needed to overcome many of life's difficult obstacles (Nelson 1993).

In this two-week workshop, teen mothers were interviewed for evaluation purposes, which showed the ladies' inability to articulate themselves because of their lack of education. Additionally, these mothers were not able to see past their present situations and could see no way out. At this point, the mothers went through a series of Drama-in-Education activities that allowed them to use their own personal experiences as a basis for solutions. As the days passed, the girls began trusting each other and grew as people. Nelson states, "there was less concern about what would happen if one would verbalize their own feelings in the open discussion groups that followed after each drama session" (p. 25). Once this occurred, the dramatic activities were adjusted in order to meet their needs. Ultimately the mothers grew into positive, confident, imaginative and hopeful women who believed that they had the power to change their future.

Lunday (2005) also studied the effects of using drama with people who had special needs in a fellow educator's classroom. She was asked to "do some drama" with her friend's special needs students with hopes that they would learn to be confident in themselves and act more appropriately with one another. After arriving late and conducting a brief informal interview, Lunday surmised that her initial ideas were not going to be effective. "They were not ready" (Lunday, 2005, [EJ] ¶7). In turn, Lunday quickly adjusted her plans so

that the students could “engage in drama in a more direct, safe, and personal way.” She chose a scene from a book that dealt with situations that they themselves may have encountered. As the students traveled with Lunday in this journey, they went from being “highly suspicious of what I was doing” to feeling enjoyment with being involved in a new kind of activity” (¶10). It is clear that drama releases imagination and energy, which some consider an educational objective (Yee Sam, 1990).

Drama-in-Education activities have the power to build social community. According to Violet Asmuth’s findings in her study with seventh and eight grade students, drama is also an important vehicle for instilling a sense of morals and values, no matter what the background. Ms. Asmuth wanted to see what would happen when students were given the opportunity to work on their own developing their own morals and values through drama and music (Asmuth,1978). She, along with the classroom teachers, conducted small group discussions with the students about their morals and values, and worked on role-playing situations that gave students the chance to express their beliefs. Ms. Asmuth and the other teachers then began putting together excerpts of poetry and prose that were written by students and other outside sources which became the sources that students would use to create their pantomimes/improvised spoken dramas. To enhance the written pieces, the students collaborated with their music teacher in finding music that would be appropriate accompaniment and found movements that would best express their moods. As a final culmination, the students performed their dramas for

their parents and friends and they were well received. “So many students made statements of what the experience had meant to them; parents phoned, wrote letters, or told teachers personally of attitude changes they had seen in their children”(Asmuth,1978, p. 63).

In all of these studies, students were provided “an opportunity to express himself through verbal expressions and gestures using imagination and memory” (Yee Sam, 1990, ¶17). Additionally, it increases students’ interest, participation, and their thinking about the text, themselves and the world (Perry, 2005).

The Negatives: Why not to use Drama in the classroom?

Students can benefit in many ways from using Drama-in-Education activities. However, if conducted improperly, Drama can cause lasting negative effects within the classroom dynamic. As Robbins (1988) states, “ development through drama is a gradual, cumulative process, and it is very uncertain what may be the developmental time table, especially if drama is only an occasional activity” (as quoted from Hoetker, 1969). If the process is rushed and not used appropriately, using drama in the classroom “can waste time and become a haven for chaos” (Perry, 2005)

Yun Sun (2003) and Yee Sam (1990) state that there are several specific reasons why teachers may hesitate to try Drama-in-Education activities with their students.

1. Teachers are unfamiliar with exactly how to facilitate drama activities. (Yun Sun, 2003)

2. The thought of using drama in their classroom seems time consuming and unnecessary (Yun Sun, 2003)
3. If the teacher does not do some careful planning, the activities that are chosen are “not relevant to the needs of the student body” (Yee Sam, 1990, “Disadvantages”).
4. Even if appropriate activities are chosen, they may be difficult to monitor. “There is lots of verbal and physical activity. Therefore, it would be tough to see it all and gage performance” (Yee Sam, 1990).
5. The students are having “too much fun and not enough learning” (Yee Sam, 1990).
6. Some students may experience embarrassment and, as a result, further withdraw from participating in class (Yee Sam, 1990).
7. Simply, the fear of losing control over the students (Yee Sam, 1990).

Instead of simply passing over the chance to reap the benefits of Drama-in-Education activities, the teacher must be willing to, as Katherine Keil (2005) states, “step outside of her comfort zone”(p.98). If one cannot take this step, it is my opinion that the resulting attempt will not be successful. Also, Lunday (2005) states, it is important to keep in mind that “as challenging as it may be to do Drama (in the classroom), the rewards in terms of socialization, understanding and Language acquisition are very gratifying”(¶21).

Essentials of Successfully Using Drama-in-Education Activities

In *Structuring Drama Work*, J. Needlands and T. Goode state that when incorporating and using drama into a classroom the teachers guide the students through the activities. “This guidance (and not control) allows us to work aside our students in exploring content and form. We are learning about content and form by working and reflecting from inside the experience” (Neelands & Goode,1990, p.2). Drama creates a more even learning atmosphere meaning that students and teachers are both “spectators and participants”(Neelands & Goode,1990, p.1). The two learn from each other in a way that gives students a greater sense of ownership to their own learning while the teacher steps off stage, becoming an observer, and allows the students to be the main focus (Johnson, 1998).

Teachers Role

Barnfield (1968) indicates that the teacher is one of the key determining factors regarding the level of success of drama as an educational tool. In the process of using drama, the teacher is responsible for maintaining the enthusiasm level of the students and must also take part in some of the activities that have been planned. The teacher does this by being willing to go with the students on the drama journey, while also serving as a guide through the various exercises (Barnfield, 1968). This means that the teacher has to be willing to change her original lesson plans in order to meet the needs of the class at that present moment. Weltsek (2005) further elaborates on the duties of a teacher using Drama-in-Education activities:

“In role, the teacher has a responsibility to work towards goals which reach beyond the children’s. But he can’t do this with out respect for their intentions. The teacher is responsible for helping the group confront issues it identified at the beginning of the process and when working with an outside text, to look for moments to critically connect with that text, not to impose values or provide answers”(p. 78).

Here in this description, the teacher is not the one dominating the learning. He is playing an active role in all aspects of the chosen activities (Yee Sam, 1990). Additionally, as the teacher and student embark on this journey, “the teacher must be convinced of the effectiveness of these activities if he wants to encourage his students to have a positive attitude towards these ideas” (Yee Sam, 1990, “Disadvantages” ¶10). Once this is understood, the teacher can move onto the next important step, creating and forming unique dramatic activities

Choosing the Activities for the Group

According to Nellie McCaslin, a well-planned session involving creative dramatics provides exercises in critical thinking as well as an opportunity for students to use their creativity (McCaslin, 1974). By first identifying the purpose for using drama in the classroom, teachers will

strengthen the curriculum (Perry, 2005). Because finding the perfect drama activity is very difficult, the teacher must always be ready with new drama exercises and activities which will keep the student's attention (Spolin, 1986)(Barnfield, 1968). Another reason for having a class that is rich with Drama-in-Education activities is that it allows the students to better internalize and understand the material (Booth & Neelands, 1998).

When choosing new drama activities it is also important that they "engage many different aptitudes"(Kriete, 2002, p.85). This will ensure that "all children will have (the chance and) experience in the role of leader and in the role of learner. All (students) will get to feel foolish and smart" (Kriete, 2002, p.85).

It is important to have each class period structured in a way that allows the students to have time to explore the activity, discuss what occurred, and a time to silently reflect upon what was done. Johnson (1998) recalls such an organized lesson that he observed in Mr. Keher's second grade class. In this lesson Mr. Keher reads the students a narrative story about a frog and uses the picture to talk to his students about a frogs changes as it grows from egg to tadpole, to frog. After the lesson at the carpet, the kids return to their seats and Mr. Keher "Models a short two-minute drama involving three tadpoles and two bullhead fish. Through actions and dialogue he gives hints about how each character might be portrayed."(p. 2) and also demonstrates how the students might want to express a frogs changing stages. After the demonstration and brief question and answer time, the students were split into

groups and had the chance to create their own unique drama. Before the end of class, the students performed their short dramas for their fellow classmates and Mr. Keher. At the end of each performance the students and Mr. Keher gave both positive and negative feedback. In this use of creative activity, the students had the opportunity to be directly involved with the material to be learned and thereby took an active part in their learning. It allowed the students to work closely with the newly learned information.

In being very deliberate regarding the sequence of dramatic events in class the teacher encourages students to take major responsibility for giving meaning to the “curricular concepts and to communicate them through action, gesture and dialogue” (Robbins, 1988, “Role of Facilitator” ¶3). By asking for the input from the students the teacher gives them the feeling that they have a say in what route their education will be (Asmuth, 1978).

Building Community and Trust within the Group

A well-known researcher, Vivian Paley (2000), has stated that children who do not fit in with their classmates, know this subconsciously. A teacher’s successful selection of drama activities may even level the playing field between the popular and unpopular children and even aid in shuffling that predetermined order. There is an inherent need for people to belong to a group and as Yee Sam (1990) continues, when using drama appropriately, there is a “temporary suspension of the ego”(“Value of Drama” #6). Once everyone is on an even playing field, “everyone works together and gets to know one

another on a level where they can offer themselves as artists and know that they will be respected and taken care of” (Landay, 2005).

In order to create this supportive community, it is necessary that the teacher choose activities that expend the hyper child’s energy and encourage the shy and uncooperative student to participate, while making a deliberate effort to not stifle their contributions. (Yee Sam, 1990) They need to not be worried about what other class members will say and do (Landay, 2005).

The Need for Reflection

With all of the action of drama, it is also necessary that there is constant reflection by all parties involved (Lundy, 2005). Lundy also states that this reflection can take place during breaks in the drama when students take a step back out of the role they are playing and reflect upon their experiences in a discussion or written reflection format.

From constant feedback provided by the activities, “the teacher can better plan (future) strategies for more effective learning and teaching (in the future)” (Yee Sam, 1990, “Value of Drama” #7). Landay, (2005) also supports the importance of reflection by stating that end of class debriefings are common and that reflection highlights successes and areas for improvements and makes visible what everyone is learning. Here, students discuss, pose and answer questions about their work (Landay, 2005) and are challenged to think in depth about what is going on in the story (Lundy, 2005).

How have Drama-in-Education activities been in a general Music class?

Though there have been many research studies, which document Drama-in-Education activities being used in many subject areas, there have been few that deal with the realm of music education.

Guinsburg (1991) studied the use of drama and music, in combination, to enhance the educational community between mentally delayed and non delayed children. In the study, Guinsburg used music to initiate improvised play among the students. Over the course of two weeks, Guinsburg found that students have an easier time creating within the constraints of drama exercises when there is music being played in the background. Additionally, Guinsburg noticed that when there was music present during the dramatic episodes, the students with mental disabilities were able to play in a dramatic experience without any frustration episodes. Here music seemed not a basis for their drama improvisation activity, but rather as background or mood music for the children.

Barnfield (1968) believed that while using music as audio background for the students is beneficial, it is also quite useful as a tool in helping students to create dramatic scenes based on the piece of music they are listening to. When doing this, it is believed that the students will be able to better connect with the true mood of a piece of music. By having them act out the emotion/mood of a piece of music, it permits both students and teachers to see how they interpret the piece rather than just listen to them describe it.

It is my opinion that both Guinsburg and Barnfield are correct even though they speak of different ways music is useful in the creative process of drama. Their work with music education and Drama-in-Education activities suggests that there is much yet to be explored.

Conclusion

Tiffany Hunt (2005) states that excitement can manage to engage a class in just about anything. If done correctly, drama can provide that excitement and increased engagement that a teacher is looking for. Doing drama is a tool that can be used to explore general themes and serve as a catalyst for critical inquiry (Downey, 2005). Additionally Yee Sam (1990) says “Drama-in-Education activities provide a break from the traditional ‘Chalk and talk’ methodology and helps to reduce the tension and stress associated with it”(“conclusion”). Fun, less stress and more student engagement in my opinion are the recipe ingredients for success.

DRAMA IN 4TH GRADE MUSIC-THE STORY

Starting This Drama Journey

After establishing a framework for my study involving drama with the two fourth grade classes, my confidence and enthusiasm to begin was soaring. Things felt good, really secure, like nothing could shake my devotion to implementing the new Drama-in-Education activities. I was *so* dead wrong!

Though I was informed at the end of last year that chances were pretty good that “music a la carte” was going to be a reality, I thought it would not happen at least for another year. The closer August got, the more it looked like my wishes were not going to be granted. “Oh great, now how am I going to do all of these drama activities in a regular classroom with desks?”

I was very nervous and I could feel my excitement for my study starting to wane because I had other things to do like, obtain a music cart and begin to restructure how music classes would be conducted. Being on a cart is NOTHING like being in a room. You are this traveling nomad, a snail, slowly moving from place to place with all of your stuff because there is no such place as home. In my experience, it is not the best way to teach. In fact, I really dislike it with all of my being, but if there are no vacant rooms in the building, it is what has to be done. So you make it work, and just smile when other teachers ask, “So, Melissa, how *is it* doing music class on a cart?”, even though you would rather do otherwise.

As my husband and I were working on designing and building my “snail shell”, I had decided a few things about how class was going to be run.

It was still important that there was a definite routine to class, so that essentially remained the same. The students' learning/reviewing of various patriotic songs was also crucial, so that too remained.

In thinking about the new dramatic aspect that was to occur in class, I decided that I would have to create an open space in each room in order to conduct music in a close group setting that was different from what they experienced during their regular class time. My second and final idea came from remembering my own experience with drama.

In the beginning of the school year I would be asking the students to do things that many, if not all of them had never done before. This exploration of the unknown would make them feel very self-conscious, especially if their homeroom teacher was in the room watching them. In my college drama class we were very nervous in front of each other but when someone not engaged in the class walked in, we instantly became uncomfortable and unsure of what we were doing. In light of my own personal experiences, before school began, I informed the teachers of my intentions to move the desks to create an open space and I requested that they not be in the room during music class for the first month. I was lucky because both teachers were very understanding and supportive.

Trustworthiness

In beginning my study it was crucial to make certain that all participants involved trusted that when I was doing research in my classroom, I was not violating their personal rights in any way. According to Holly,

Arhar & Kasten (2005), maintaining this trust is dependent on six things: Involvement of the participants, the assurance of confidentiality, anonymity with all involved, informing participants of the right to withdraw, building trust between all involved and being self reflective on a daily basis.

Before I spoke with the students and classroom teachers, the main participants in this study, I had several conversations with both my principal and assistant principal *after* having my study approved by Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board (HSIRB)(*See Appendix A*). I explained how I planned to collect information for my report and how I would present my findings. I also shared with them my rationale for conducting my research study. Before the final conversation that led to the actual signing of the prepared consent form (*See Appendix B*), I made sure that they were additionally informed that the students and teachers' anonymity would be maintained. I also explained that the teachers and students had the option to withdraw themselves from the study at any point in time in the form of a brief note that they could give to me.

My next step was to inform the two classroom teachers of what they and their students would be participating in the next few months. In an informal conference we discussed that while I would be interviewing them and their students, I would do everything to conceal their identity, beginning with assigning them and their students' pseudonyms (Holly. M, Arhar, J. & Kasten, 2005). Lastly, in this meeting, I explained that it was their choice in whether or not I use their comments in my study and that they could choose to

withdraw their own statements from the study at anytime. After telling me that they were frazzled from the beginning of school stuff (like many teachers, including myself, feel) they both said that my study sounded potentially beneficial and interesting. The two fourth grade teachers of the classes that I was going to study, signed the consent forms (*See Appendix C*). I was now ready to explain my study to the fourth grade students.

In talking with the students of both classes, I made sure they knew I was doing a research study and they had the opportunity to be a part of it if providing they and their parents or guardians approved. In order to do that, I had to talk to them using their language, meaning I had to tell them in terms that they would understand.

I told them that, like them, I was going to school and that I was doing that so that I could be a better teacher. It was stated that part of my homework of my class was to do a research report about what I do in my classroom. I additionally told them that I would be writing about our class and the use of new games and activities in class. I also told them that if I were going to write about what we did in class, this would mean I would have to write about *them* and what they do each day. I explained, "I will not use your real names because, if I would, your involvement would not be anonymous." I knew they understood in the one class when a student raised his hand and said "Right because even though people will read about what we do in our classrooms, they won't know *who we are, like our real names and stuff.*" Others nodded in agreement. I also explained that each of them would get a "new name" in

my report and that I would not share their actual identities in my final report. Though the students were sad that they would not know their new name, they approved and were eager to begin.

Furthermore, I told them that while I was happy that they were interested in going on this journey with me, we had to get the permission of their parents or guardians by having them (their parents/guardians) read a consent form that explained to them all that I told them (the students), and sign it (*See Appendix D*). I told the students that they too had to sign the consent form saying that they wanted to be involved in the study and that they understood that they could withdraw their participation from the report of the findings in the study at any point by writing me a little note, just as their parents could withdraw them in the same way.

As we proceeded through the class that day, I made it known to them that they would still have to sing and participate in class as usual, BUT if they did not want to participate in a drama activity that we were doing that day it was up to them to tell me and I would let them sit out at their request. I continued to remind the students of this as we proceeded through subsequent classes.

Ready, Set, Tableau

There was never a question in my mind that I would seek to use Tableau in conjunction with the patriotic songs we sing each month. In order to have the students experience moderate success and feel somewhat

comfortable with it from the outset, I felt that the students' first encounter with tableau needed to be a positive one.

I introduced tableau to both classes on the first day of music class. Usually on the first day of music class we go over the rules and expectations regarding their participation in music class. In the past I have introduced this to classes as the most boring music class you will have all year. I decided that introducing tableau to the classes while covering the rules and expectations would be a positive idea because they would be taking a more active part in the first class than usual.

The following is a play about how I introduced tableau to the students on the first day of music class in both classrooms.

Narrator: Mrs. Rhode pushes the cart into the classroom and the students look at her and her huge cart with surprise. It appears as though they cannot believe that she is coming to them rather than the other way around. After 5 minutes of getting the cart ready she begins her introduction.

Mrs. Rhode: Good morning guys! It's great to see you all this morning. I see lots of familiar faces and some new ones. For today, you will be staying at your desks but that will change next week. (*students smile slightly*) Before we start today, I'm gonna take attendance.

Narrator: Mrs. Rhode takes attendance. She then asks to pass out the patriotic songbooks. The students oblige and as a class they sing

through the patriotic song of the month twice and proceed to hand in the songbooks.

Mrs. Rhode: Great job all. Now guys, I'm sure that you have been going over rules all week, but it is time that we do it in here.

Narrator: At the sound of this comment, most students either stare blankly, others groan with thoughts of torture in their heads while still others just simply contort their faces into looks of disgust. Mrs. Rhode is aware of their visible concern for the events yet to come but appears to be un-wavered by it.

Mrs. Rhode: I could just tell you the rules but that would do no good because only a few of them would be listening, so we are going to do something different.*(Eyes light a bit--but only a teensy bit.)* Today I will be splitting you into 5 groups. Each group will get a rule that is cut up onto pieces like a puzzle. Uh, Yes Ben?

Ben:*(with a look of confusion)* Miss, we did that last year!

Mrs. Rhode: I know, but this year the rules are different because I'm on a cart this year.

Ben: *(Relieved)* Oh, Ok.

Mrs. Rhode: Also I think you *(acknowledging Ben)* and the rest of you will be excited to know that this year we will be doing many interesting things this year, but I'll give you all the details next week.

Narrator: The students look at each other with raised eyebrows and mouths slightly open with surprise.

Mrs. Rhode: Now, continuing on...so after you solve it, your group will figure out what the rule means in your own words, then you will figure out a movement for the rule. You know, like when we do movements for concert songs.

Narrator: In order to make sure the students understand what is about to happen, Mrs. Rhode works with the students to create movements for examples of silly rules including: brush your hair and wave to the teacher when she comes in.

Mrs. Rhode: Ok. Well, since you understand what the first two parts of your task are, you are going to be doing one more thing and it's new. Let me write it on the board. *(She writes tableau on the board)* This is a French word called Tableau. Say Tableau.

Students: *(quietly)* Tableau?

Mrs. Rhode: *(Loudly)* Tableau!

Students: *(Louder than before)* Tableau!

Mrs. Rhode: Um, I'm sorry. What was that you said?

Students: *(Shouting)* Tableau!!!

Mrs. Rhode: Good! Now that you are comfortable saying that word I'll demonstrate what tableau is and you all see if you can figure out what it is.

Narrator: The students look at each other with nervous looks while Mrs. Rhode does a motion for the rule: Raise your hand before you speak. She is waving her hand and moving her mouth as if she is talking.

Mrs. Rhode: Tableau!

Narrator: She freezes still. The students raise their hands and Oooh's , I know's and Pick Me's are heard in the classroom.

Mrs. Rhode: Donna.

Donna: You get still when you are doing Tableau?

Mrs.Rhode: Exactly right Donna great job. Lets all practice going from a motion to a tableau.

Narrator: The students and Mrs. Rhode proceed to practice tableau“ing” for about two minutes. The students are then split into five groups and while they are working, Mrs. Rhode is moving from group to group helping the students with their motions and tableaux.

In the last 15 minutes of class, each group read their rule, did their motion and their tableau. The students were smiling and laughing. They were clearly at ease with the new concept.

Later, at the end of the day, as the students were leaving, I heard some of the kids saying “hey...look...tableau” and they were frozen. I knew at that point they had liked tableau and would be looking forward to using it in the Walk, Walk, Light Bulb we would be doing from then on.

“Miss, wha-do-ya mean: Light bulb?”

I figured that after introducing the term tableau to the students, I would not have a problem expanding on it by incorporating it into other activities. We began to experiment with Walk, Walk Light bulb during the third meeting of music class. Before the students from both classes actually got to do this warm-up activity, I had to explain it. This was a bit challenging the first time around because I had to use words that were familiar to a fourth grader rather than an adult.

I told both classes that after we sang our patriotic song of the month we would be doing a new activity called *Walk, Walk Light Bulb*. At this, without anything else being said by me, one student in Ms. Fine’s class looked at me with a furrowed brow and said, “Miss, wha-do-ya mean light bulb?” I knew that, by his response, the name of the game alone had interested him and other students as well. I went on to explain that, in this new activity, we would be doing tableaus based on words and phrases found in our patriotic songs. Additionally, I had told them that in the activity they would be walking around the room trying to spread themselves out so as to fill the room and not leave any space in between each tableau moment.

In both classes, students timidly nodded their heads signaling they understood what we were about to attempt (even though their body language suggested otherwise). I knew that the best way for them to understand what I was talking about was to have to them try it. So we all stood up and I gave the

signal to start moving about the room, which was a single snap and the word “walk”.

At the snap of my fingers they were walking about the room in a large cluster, not wanting to leave their classmates and set out on their own. Girls stuck with girls and boys stuck with boys. It reminded me of my drama class from college. I thought that it was interesting that when dealing with something new and unfamiliar, people will stick together no matter what age they are. I guess that’s what is meant by safety in numbers.

The first word I called out for them to do a tableau to was, America, from the song *America (My Country Tis of Thee)*. When I called this out many of them looked to others for ideas before committing to a tableau of their own while other students came up with original and unique still images. I was sure to compliment as many students as I could in both classes. One student in Ms. Fine’s class was very frustrated in that week and said, “I don’t know what to do. I can’t think of nothing.” I think he expected me to be angry with him for saying this but I couldn’t be. “It’s ok, Bob. If you can’t think of anything then just freeze still until the next phrase and maybe you’ll think of something.”

This too was just like when my own drama class did this for the first time. Everyone was so worried about doing the correct thing and “being right”. We copied too. I was a copycat.

In deciding to do this activity with my students I was comforted by the fact that, in my personal experience, the more we did Walk, Walk, Light Bulb,

the more we were willing to take risks. I was counting on having the same thing happening to my students in my fourth grade music classes.

In addition to all that was going on during this activity, I also noticed that there were some giggles during the activity but that did not bother me at all. It was their first time and they were expressing their nervousness in the best way they could.

The next week, I thought I would try to add some group work to the mix. I wanted to have them work in small groups and create group tableau of *America*. With both groups, this was not a good experience. Students were fighting and arguing more than they were working together. In many groups, I became the referee. The kids were not having fun and I was not either. In Ms. Fine's class, I noticed that Becca was being bossy with her group members and Clarissa didn't want to be her group leader. On the response sheet that they were asked to fill out, many stated that they didn't like the group activity. Patrick stated that it was boring and he was only one of many to say that.

After listening to their comments during class and reading them from their response sheets that day, I realized that I had tried to push them into an area they were not yet ready to go. I was trying to take control rather than travel with them on this journey and they stopped me dead in my tracks. My focus from then on was to really listen to what my students had to say and try to give them drama activities that would best fulfill their needs. For me, not being the "conductor" of the "music education train" was a **very** scary thing.

It was difficult to believe that the students would demonstrate to me when they were ready to try group work with their peers. So, instead of me pushing them on, we took two steps back and took our time.

As the weeks passed, the students became more and more comfortable with each other and were more willing to take risks with their Tableau images. Students went from copying each other, to trying to outdo each other's images. Every time I came into the room to teach them music someone would always ask, "Hey, Ms. Rhode, are we gonna go that light bulb thing?" When I would tell them what we were, students celebrated in various ways. Some would simply say "YESSSS!" others would punch their fists up and down with excitement while others would simply look around the room and smile to their friends. I guess up until then they were not permitted to express themselves much and doing such an activity provided them a much-needed opportunity to do so.

After doing the Walk, Walk Light Bulb activity for four weeks, the kids were settling in and enjoying the opportunity to represent the words of the patriotic song of the month. We had finished the September song,, *America*, and had moved to the October song, *America the Beautiful*. After me being the leader of this activity for four weeks, they were ready for a change. The change was that students were going to take turns being the caller of the phrases from the song and that's when things began to get interesting.

Excerpt from Journal (10/21/2005)

Mrs. Rhode: “Now today when we do the Walk, Walk Light Bulb activity we will vary or change it a bit. Today, someone else will be the caller and they will be responsible for calling and telling you when to move. I think you have a good understanding of this activity now and that is why you will be taking turns being the caller from now on. We might change the activity a bit more later on, but you still know the basics of how to do it. Now who will be the caller today. (*Looking around for a student who looks interested in trying the new job*) Ok Cindy, do you think you can handle the job? (nods her head yes) Ok, come on up and take the position.”

Cindy

Cindy has always liked music class since she was a kindergartner. She was always chatty in class until last year when she had class with Evelyn, a student who is always attentive, hard working, and a natural leader. For some reason last year, Cindy always watched how Evelyn was always on top of things, sang well, and was always helping others in the room. She also saw that I allowed Evelyn to help me in many ways last year because of her exceptional participation and behavior in music class. This motivated Cindy to rise up and improve her behavior. I was so taken with their newly budding leadership qualities that I asked them to lead two sections of the third grade in their concert last year.

This year the girls are in separate classes. Now Cindy (in Mrs. Neff's class) has continued to be a great music student who is motivated and determined to put forth her very best. In class, I catch her watching my every move. I wonder if she wants to be a teacher and she is taking mental notes for the future?

So Cindy comes up and as usual she is smiling from ear to ear. I talk to her quietly and give her instructions. She nods her head and is clearly ready to go. I figure that I can probably take notes on people's tableaus today because I have a caller, which is something I should have done in Ms. Fine's class the day before (learned from that mistake!).

She begins calling, she calls the following phrases in the song

Oh Beautiful

Crown thy Good

the Fruited plain

Brotherhood

America

God

His grace on thee

Spacious skies

Amber waves of grain

sea to shining sea

As we started, Cindy was calling and releasing the students perfectly, she was loud and had great presence about her. I think she liked being in

charge. When she had the students still, I took it upon myself to remark on peoples' tableaux, ones that were new and ones that were repeats from before.

I commented on:

Sue's great acknowledgement of Stephanie as beautiful

Wendy and Jasmine crowning each other

Ben making the Fruited Plain

People who were not each other's friends touching for brotherhood

Jasmine making the crucifixion for "God"

I commented on how excellent their levels were...I was glad they were doing high and low still images.

I commented on Ben's beautiful interpretation of Grace on thee by kneeling down and putting his hands out.

Something really neat happened after the third time she stopped and I commented on the students' performance. **She started to comment on her classmates' performances!** She was truly impressed to see what she saw. It started with a look of surprise and excitement directed at me. She then followed up with a statement, "Wow that looks cool"

I replied, "Doesn't it look neat from this view point Cindy?"

She shook her head and continued. From then on, as she went through the different phrases, she walked through the group and complimented different kids. "I like that tableau, that group looks good, nice levels, and excellent job guys."

At one point Kyle said, “You always compliment the same people.” I stayed back, waiting to see what she did. She did not disappoint me, and then varied her complimenting to include everyone. I left that class in awe of Cindy. She had the opportunity to be the leader of an activity in class that day and did something that was totally unexpected. She took control of the activity that I introduced to the class and made it *their* activity. I was not needed. In her written response that day, Cindy had stated that she liked being in charge of the group and expressed a desire to do that job again.

Because of this huge breakthrough, I let this activity go on longer than usual which threw the rest of class off, but it did not matter. A breakthrough had occurred; the other stuff would wait for another day.

After that day in Mrs. Neff’s class, the students never looked back to the idea of me being the caller. They continued to evolve the activity and by the end of the study were intent on involving the caller in their tableaux.

Picture time

At the outset of this study I had intended to video tape each class three times, but that was just not working out. Other teachers in the building kept “borrowing” it and would not let others use it. Since this was a problem I decided that the next best thing was to take pictures. At least it would allow them (the students) to see how they looked when they were involved in the various drama moments throughout the study.

The first day with the camera was very tough for both classes. Every time I put it up to my eye to snap a picture of them in their tableau positions,

they unfroze and refroze into a standard picture pose. After trying several times to capture their poses, I had to tell both classes about staying in their poses so I could take their pictures.

Once they realized that they were going to be the only ones to see these pictures, they relaxed and accepted the camera as a new addition to class. For some like Ben, it became something that turned them into “camera hams”. If I had not taken pictures of them while they were doing this activity, then they would have no idea what they looked like. It gave them a chance to see themselves from an outside point of view.

Feelings, and Writing. Take One.

In order to know where the students were as far as their classroom community and their ability to write creatively, it was necessary to administer a survey/assessment (Appendix E).

Ms. Fine's class

After I had explained the survey part of the sheet to them, they got straight to work. As they finished the first part, I allowed them to draw on the back. I told them to keep the picture small because they might have to use the back for part two. They comply and as Mark was finishing up, (he was the last one) I got the Overture of 1812 by Tchaikovsky ready in the player. We started out and I began playing the piece. The kids looked around at each other and most had these clueless looks on their faces. It appeared as though they were trying to think but were having trouble, just as I expected.

After about two minutes into the first listening experience, Bob raised his hand and said, "But Miss, this don't make me think of nothing!"

"That's ok...just sit still and listen and maybe it will." I stated.

To the rest of the class I said, "Remember I will be playing the piece all over again."

As I was walking around I could see their frustration. Some just wrote anything and then got to drawing on the back. Despite this fact most of them were bopping to the music, which made me glad because these students have very few opportunities to listen to classical music at any other venue other than at school,

In my own experience, it sometimes takes a second listening to really hear a piece of music, so I decided to play the 5-minute excerpt for them a second time. Some kids added onto their statements while others were very engaged on drawing on the back. They were fourth graders, why were they so reluctant to write? (That following week I had found out in my informal interview with Ms. Fine that a majority of her class had learning disabilities, as stated in the class description above.)

Bob's side of the story

I have no idea what we did in class today. I mean it was weird. She gave us this paper that asked about music class and the other kids in my class, or something like that. I answered the questions as good as I could. I hope she doesn't get mad at me. She did say to tell the truth. We'll see when I get my paper back.

After we finished up with the top part she made us listen to this weird piece of music for the bottom part and told us to write a story or something to go with the music. When Mrs. Rhode played the song, I looked around and the other kids in my class were writing on their papers. I thought, *what is wrong with me, I can't think of something to write*. The longer we listened to this music, the more upset I got. I felt so dumb. I wanted Mrs. Rhode to help me so I called out, "But Miss, this don't make me think of nothing," but she didn't help me. She just said to wait and see if I think of anything. Well I didn't so I went to the back and drew a picture on the back. I like to draw

pictures better than I like writing anyway. I liked my picture but I erased it because she didn't tell us to draw and I don't want to get in trouble.

As I sat with my husband at dinner that night, I thought about what had occurred in Ms. Fine's class. Her students really liked drawing and did whatever they had to in order to have time to do so. I began thinking, *would it have been better to have them draw a picture of what the piece made them think of?* Still having to do the assessment with Mrs. Neff's class, I decided that for her class I would give them the option of drawing while still requiring them to do some writing about what they drew.

Mrs. Neff's Class

Taking my new knowledge from Ms. Fine's class, I passed the sheets out in Mrs. Neff's class. I explained the first part to them and watched them work. For Carl and Frank, filling out the first part of the survey was a race to see if they could be the first ones done. "Maybe I'm wrong" I thought, "maybe it didn't take them long to think about what each question meant and then chose the correct answer."

While some were doing this, others I noticed were taking a long time looking at each question. Judging by the expressions what were on some of their faces, I'm pretty sure some of them were really trying to circle the best answer that described them.

After the students finished their upper part of the survey, I explained what they were going to do for the second part and made sure to include the new variation: the picture part.

Excerpt from Journal (9/30/05)

“Now guys you are going to be listening to this piece of music called the 1812 Overture. Since this piece is long you are only going to listen to the first 5 minutes of the piece. When you are listening to it, I would like you all to write down what the music makes you see in your head. If you are not comfortable with using words only then you may draw a picture or pictures of what the music makes you see in your head. What you can draw or write about can be more than one thing. If the music makes you see trees, then draw a pictures or write ‘I see trees.’ Maybe the music will make you see more than one thing. THAT’S OK. If you are being honest and you are writing down what the music makes you think of, than you are doing a great job.”

I though it was interesting that when I told the students that they could draw a picture, I heard them say “Yes,” “Alright,” and “Ohhh”. They were clearly relieved that they could draw a picture. I wondered what would have happened if had I let the other class do the same thing and immediately felt bad that I had not thought of it earlier.

Before I turned on the player, I told them that I was going to be writing too so I would appreciate if they would do their best to keep quiet. Thinking about that statement, I added that maybe there were other classmates who felt

the same way I did and they should try to respect their wishes as well as mine. When I said that I was going to be writing too, Heidi looked at me and smiled. Did she think it was good that I was writing too? Why? Did it make her feel like doing this activity was cool or ok? Or did she think it was funny that I was acting like a student? I just don't know. I guess I should have asked her.

As I pressed play on the CD player, I said that if they wanted to just listen the first time they, should sit with their head down and maybe close their eyes so that they can focus on the music and not their classmates in the room. Surprisingly, many of them took my advice and put their heads down to listen, while others got very quick to work. Their pencils were moving fast and furious trying to capture everything they were thinking on the back of the paper.

Just to note the 1812 Overture starts out very serene and calm. At about halfway into the first five minutes, the piece gets very loud and frantic sounding. When we hit this point the kids looked up at me as I ruined everything they had been doing.

Even though I wanted to not talk, I interjected, "If this part does not go with the other part of your story and picture, IT'S OK. Just start your next thought on another part of the paper."

As we finish the first listening I give the students about three minutes to finish up their thought and then started the piece over again while telling those who did not write or draw to do so now. Additionally, I told the others to look over what they had written as they are listening in order to make sure

that what they did makes sense to them, and afterward just wait quietly until the piece is finished.

I finished my writing after the first two minutes of the second playing so I got up and start walking around. As I walked past Allen he says, “Ms. Rhode wanna see what I did?”

I leaned over to him and said “yes but I will be reading them after class on my own”

“Oh, ok...but look and see the pictures?”

“Yes Allen, I think they look good, keep going.”

As I walked around and students were finishing up, they were staying generally quiet.

While I was standing around Ben looked at me and said, “Miss Rhode can we share ours with the class? I wanna share mine. Look, see what I did. I did a monster and he says ‘I’ll be back. See?’”

I looked and indeed Ben was doing a great job. He was totally into the activity and put forth the best effort ever as far as music class.

Tara saw me with Ben and interjects, “I want you to read mine.”

“I will read everyone’s papers, but not now because if we do that, we will not be able to sing,” I say.

“Oh, ok”

The class began passing their sheets to me as we were passing out the patriotic songbooks. I noticed that Frank and Aaron were taking longer than

the rest of the kids, so I allowed them to continue while we went on. They knew that they could join in when they were finished and did so.

As I looked at this classes writing pieces, I found that Mrs. Neff's class produced better work in terms of volume and quality. This experience confirmed that allowing the students the opportunity to draw what they heard relieved some tension associated with creative writing. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1: Ms. Fine's student responses vs. Mrs. Neff's
Bill's Response from Ms. Fine's Class

Survey

Student Survey
B M E

Name: B [redacted]
Date: 5/2/00
Section: 4-3/00

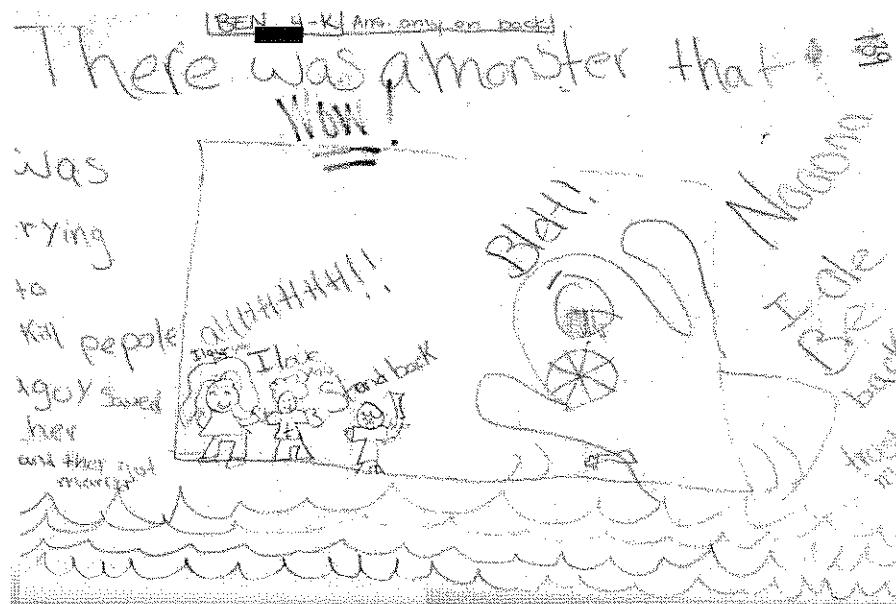
Part Two

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it: (The William Tell Overture) 1812

It reminds me of when I
was born, when my father was
as the great deer she turns smaller

(Go onto the back if you need to)

Ben's Response from Mrs. Neff's Class



(Fig. 1 cont.)

Stacey's Response from Ms. Fine's class

Survey

Student Survey
 (B) M E

Name: STACEY
 Date: 11/19/05
 Sex: M

Part Two
 1812

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. [The Williams Tell Overton]

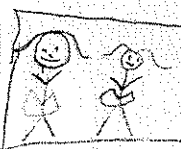
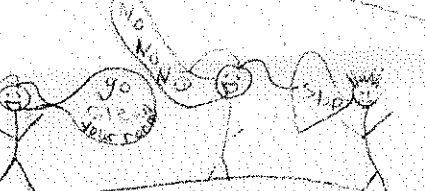

This song makes me think about my uncel because he died yesterday. It is sad and I miss him. I think about him. I love him and X-mas I love X-mas. I really miss my uncel.

(Go onto the back if you need to)

Cindy's Response from Mrs. Neff's class

51 CINDY [redacted] - Answers only on the back

OK

	bulerena
	fiting
	DaD die

In comparing the two classes, it became clear to me that a student's writing ability directly effected the kind of work they produced. This is not to say that Ms. Fine's students' work was not good. It was good in a different way then Mrs. Neff's students because it was more visual. These differences did not matter when it came to actualizing what was on their papers.

Making It Real

After the writing, I looked at their writing and separated them into groups based on the themes they wrote about. In these groups, the students were to take all of their writing pieces and create an action sequence. Additionally, they were told that some or all of the groups would be able to present their drama for their classmates. The results were exceptional, they had a great time, and I was sure to also take pictures of their dramatic creations.

In both classes, we began the meat of our class by reviewing various pieces of information about the percussion family including historical data and actual instruments in each subcategory. Before we moved on to the creation part of class, I handed the sheets out, told them that I looked at what they wrote and we were going to be doing something with it after they had a chance to see my comments to them. As I returned the papers to them, they all looked for a grade (but there was none), they then became intensely focused on what I wrote on their papers. I found this interesting because in both classes, students had expressed to me, and their teachers, that they felt as though they could not write, but they were so eager to see what I wrote to them.

After they had ample time to see what I had written, I explained what we were going to do with them.

Excerpt from Journal entry 11/10/05:

“ Now I have split you into groups of four or five based on what you wrote. In each group there is a captain. That person is in charge for organizing the story sharing session. Then together, the group is responsible for combining all of the ideas to make one story that you, as a group, will be acting out in front of your peers. (*they look at me and each other with excitement and anticipation*). Does everyone understand? (*Smiles and whispers begin to arise*). O.K...now the numbers on your papers represent the group you are in...now ...group one...”

I gave the group assignments and told them where in the room they were going to practice. As I looked around I noticed that it was getting very loud. The kind of loud that means students are not staying on task. As I got ready to tell them to work quietly, I took another walk around to visit each group and saw that they were all on task! “*Wow, I thought, no yelling, arguing and redirecting.*” Both classes knew what they had to do and were determined to do it. This was a big improvement coming from two classes who have daily discussions about cooperation and teamwork.

At the end of the ten-minute work session due to time restraints, three out of the six groups in each class had the opportunity to perform their dramas

with the music. Each group's performance was phenomenal and received spontaneous applause from their classmates. Also, during each performance, the students performing were very focused on their composition and the audience was paying special attention to the performing groups' every move.

As each group drama finished, we (the audience) took turns complimenting what we saw and additionally made helpful suggestions for improving what they had done.

Though time for class was up, I knew that it was important for them to have a chance to write about what we had done. My prompt to them was "So what did you think about the two activities we did with the percussion family?" With this being said, the students again got right to work, intent on sharing their feelings with me.

After the brief writing session, as I began moving my cart out of their class, students in each room were calling out to me: "Are we gonna do this next week?" "I wanna do that again!" "That was so fun, Miss!" At that point, after having not yet read their responses, I had known that they enjoyed what we had done.

Figure 6: Student responses from Ms. Fine's class & Mrs. Neff's class

Bill 4-Fine

I liked the activity.
I wish we can do this again.
I really liked how [redacted]
was shake the rattal. [redacted]
did a good job to I think
[redacted] was the best drummer.

Clarissa 4-Fine

today we war in gaps
in my gap we were sitting
pepar was flying it was fun
Las bo it gand.

Maria 4-Fine

Today we're going to do A gathering
of killing people. It was fun. I hope
we do it again so the people that didn't
get to go. I was able to work with
my group. It was really fun.

Paul 4-Fine

I want to do it again because it was
fun today when we were flying in
the sky.

Mary 4-Fine

today I did in music class
with my group we were play
an activity. What I liked from
the part is when [redacted] killed
me and I fell down [redacted] and
[redacted] were doing the drum
it was so fun I wish I can
do it again.

My favorite part was when
I was dancing in my group.
It was so much fun planning
what we should do. What I
liked was watching the people
act. I want this to happen again.

Sincerely,
Alv.

(Fig. 6 cont.)

Kyle

4-Neff

JRD 3/2

My favorite part was when we were playing Grums

~~It was so cool it felt like we were like real indians~~

We were having comber sajan so we all could have a big party.

And I liked walk walk light bulb

And I think the other peoples performents

Dear Mrs. Rode

I like doing the Drama game because I thought it was interesting to see the way everybody did cool ways of doing things I liked it because we get to show how we think of things

Sincerely
Erin 4 Neff

Mrs. Rode I think this idea is your best one ever no a fence My team was saying thank you for teaching us today I hope we do it agin. Next time see you next week and do me a favor and bring happy times like an apple for us to share and I love the game exps sheley group

Oh ya ps. Whats it call?

By See you next week
have a good day.

4.

Ben

Dear Mrs. Rode I liked that game we did it was terrific I hope we play again. I like it because we get to work in groups and agree who story to chase. But I'm sad that my group did not get to show our class. I also liked my group members because they didn't fight about who story to go with

Sincerely,

Wendy

4-Neff

To Mrs. Rode
What I liked about it was when we were doing every thing and I liked and when we got to work in a group and the perfor mis was great I can't wait in till you come back next time We should do it agin because it is fun to talk but when we are in groups and I loved to day all day I can't wait until next Friday

had lots of fun I ♥

Sincerely

CINDY

4-Neff

Feelings...and writing. Take Two.

At the midpoint of my study, I was ready for both classes to re-complete the survey/assessment. As I looked at the survey part of my original document, I realized that I did not allow the students to reflect on their survey answers. I thought, what if they had something to say about why they did not trust their classmates, or why they liked music class. After realizing these things, I decided to change my survey part so the students would have the opportunity to elaborate on the answers they circled if they chose to do so. (*See Appendix: H*)

Ms. Fine's class

Before class

Prior to giving the Midpoint assessment to Ms. Fine's class, I had the opportunity to interview three students. I felt this was necessary because up until this point, the class was doing well and progressing moderately, but not as much as Mrs. Neff's class. I understood that with each class, the progression would be different. I felt that I needed a bit more information from students in Ms. Fine's class, in case I didn't get it from them on the upcoming survey. I chose three students who represented the whole spectrum of ability in terms of writing and participation levels. In this interview, I was surprised that all students were very open and upfront with their answers.

By the end of the interview, I learned that they, just like the students in Mrs. Neff's class, knew why the new dramatic activities were helping them in music. Mrs. Fine's students also were able to verbalize things they did not

like. They thought of ways to make those things work better. Lastly, I found it particularly interesting when Maria said she liked when I just write comments because “We are not worried about what the grade is we are trying to focus on telling you if we liked class or not.” I was very pleased to hear this and hoped that the things they stated was a true reflection of their classmates.

In class

After I had explained the mid point assessment, they were quietly working and diligently trying to answer the best they could. They were even asking me questions about the paper (how do I spell this? what does this say? can you read this to me?) which was not like last time. These occurrences made me think *are they now that comfortable with me? and they must feel as though they know me on a new level.* If that was not the case, perhaps the new survey form was enticing their comments.

After ten minutes, most of them were still working. I told them to take a break because we were going to do the back assessment. Just as before I explained that, they were going to be listening to a piece of music and going to write a story depicting what they “saw” just like they did two weeks ago during the percussion lesson and two months ago. They were just fine with this idea, but got very excited when I told them that this time they could now draw a picture to go with the words they wrote.

Right as I was about to begin the music, Patrick asked, “Do we have to do this at our desks or can we move somewhere else?” Thinking that giving them the opportunity to chose their place to write might help them, I agreed

on the condition that they had to always be working and not fool around. As it usually happened with classes, the boys and girls segregated themselves.

Lastly before we began, I explained to them that they did hear this piece before and they would recognize. I then asked them if they thought it would make them think of the same story they had written the first time. Much to my surprise, many of them said no. I began to wonder if they did indeed sense their growth and hoped that they expressed this on the front part of the paper.

During the first listening, most of the students are very busy and focused. Mark, who likes to distract his classmates, started to whistle and tap his pencil on the floor. Now in the past, his classmates would have looked up, yelled at him, and then start to argue with each other until I would have to intervene; but this did not happen. Instead of a negative reaction by his classmates, Shelley simply looked over at Mark, put her finger to her mouth and said, "Shhh. C'mon Mark, be quiet and get back to work." Mark looked at her and got back to work and the rest of the class accepted this as they were deeply entrenched in writing their stories.

After we finished the first listening, I gave them some time to finish their thoughts and we began the second listening. The last time that we did this in September, most of the students decided to be finished writing after the first listening and got chatty with each other, but now two months later, it was different. This time they were taking a genuine interest in cementing their ideas on the paper and were re-reading their compositions, adding in extra

parts where they felt necessary. I began to feel as though they had made great progress regarding their comfort levels with each other and their willingness to think creatively.

After the second listening, I told them to go back to their seats and finish the front part of the paper. As they were finishing their surveys, I had a spontaneous idea to softly play different music for them to work to. Many of them smiled at me and then got back to work. As we were getting to wrap up for the day, several students said that they liked the soft music playing while they were working. Toby went a step further by saying that “It was good music Miss.”

After having witnessed what was their best writing session yet, I was eager to look at their papers and determine if indeed they had performed better. As I read the sheets, I was very impressed with what work they had done. Most every student thoroughly filled in the survey questionnaire and constructed a detailed story. In many cases, after looking at their first stories to the 1812 Overture, I noticed that their second stories were more detailed and attention-grabbing. It was very impressive to see such growth in a class that had such difficulties in virtually every other subject area.

Paul's work

First time

Survey

Student Survey
 M E

Name Paul
 Use 412105
 Section FINE

Part One

DIRECTIONS: CIRCLE ONE ANSWER UNDER EACH SENTENCE.

- I like to answer questions in music class.
 Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I remember things we learn in music class.
 Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always
- When we sing songs in music class I understand what they mean.
 Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I trust the kids in my class.
 Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always
- The kids in my class make fun of me for what I say in music class.
 Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always

Part Two

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. (The William Tell Overture)

1812
~~The song make me think of my grandmother because she does because she has a hunter. I'm going to miss her.~~

(Go onto the back if you need to)
 Final Reflection Survey

(Now) Second time

Fill in the following questions. NAME Paul 4. Fine

When Mrs. Rhode comes to my room for music class I feel happy
 because... when we sing in music class.

I think that the new things we are doing in music are cool
 because... when we do sing.

My favorite things we have done since the September is music
 because... we sing a lot in music class.

Circle one!
 I like working with my classmates: YES NO SOMETIMES

Why is this so? because we do lots of fun with our classmates

Music class is better now than last year? YES NO SOMETIMES

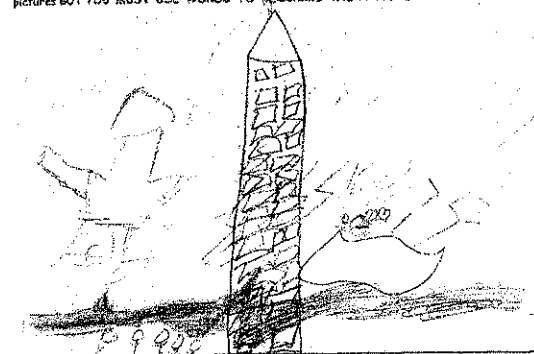
Why is this so? because we sing a lot.

I understand what the songs we sing mean. YES NO SOMETIMES

Why do you think this is so? because we do lots of fun things in music class.

FLIP OVER TO THE BACK

300 Listen to the song and write a story based on what you hear. You are allowed to draw pictures BUT YOU MUST USE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE PICTURE OR PICTURES!



I see people playing music with drums in a park side in the rain and they are getting wet outside but the people that are in a boat and they are getting in the rain while they are in the boat and they getting wet with the water and I see a big white horse in the water.

Aly's work

First time

Survey

Student Survey
(B) M E

Name Aly
Date 9-15-04
Section FIVE

Part One

DIRECTIONS: CIRCLE ONE ANSWER UNDER EACH SENTENCE.

- I like to answer questions in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I remember things we learn in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- When we sing songs in music class I understand what they mean.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I trust the kids in my class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- The kids in my class make fun of me for what I say in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

Part Two

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. ¹⁸¹² ~~(The William Tell Overture)~~

This reminds me of a trip that I went in
third grade because we were going to talk about
Dance there were people using instruments and that
reminds me of this song.

(Now) Second time

Fill in the following questions.

NAME Aly a fox

When Mrs. Rhode comes to my room for music class I feel excited
because... we do fun things like walk with light bulbs and
the groups I really like listening to music and writing
what I feel.

I think that the new things we are doing in music are very fun
because... the game of what am I playing reminds me
of all of the instruments I think of.

My favorite things we have done since the September is what am I playing
walk with light bulb group drama, and group drama
because... each game makes me to express my self.

Circle one:

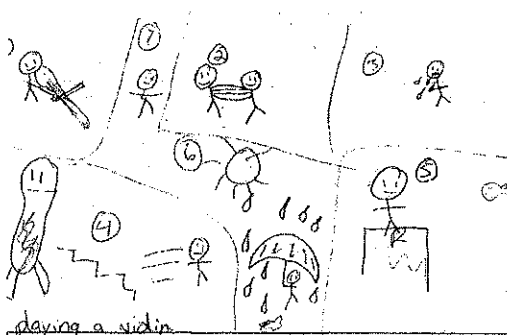
I like working with my classmates: YES NO SOMETIMES
Why is this so? because sometimes they don't listen to me
I like it when they listen to my ideas.

Music class is better now than last year? YES NO SOMETIMES
Why is this so? because we are doing drama stuff
and it is not all music.

I understand what the songs we sing mean. YES NO SOMETIMES
Why do you think this is so? because when we do the
walk with light bulb, so that tells me
all about the music.

FLIP OVER TO THE BACK----->

Listen to the song and write a story based on what you hear. You are allowed to draw pictures BUT YOU MUST USE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE PICTURE OR PICTURES!



playing a violin
slow dancing
1) crying because someone broke up with them
2) ran away from a monster
3) want to be a president of the US
and playing trumpet
4) raining but then stopped raining and
animals came out and attacked him, he
found a hiding place, he was alive
5) stopped dancing.

Mrs. Neff's class

Excerpt from Journal 11/18/05:

Mrs. Rhode: *(to students)* "Before we begin I wanted to tell you how interested

I was in your responses to the activity we did last week" *(they smiled)* "It was so interesting to see how you all felt and that is exactly what I want you all to do today as well, because if you don't make your best effort and try to explain how you feel about the new things we do in class, then I will assume that you are not happy. That will mean I will change what we do in here again"

(They look at me as if to say 'please no') "Are we all understanding what we have to do?" *(they all nod their heads yes)*

"Ok now when I give you your sheet please go and get a pencil and something hard to write upon and go somewhere in the room where you feel that you can concentrate without distraction."

(Reusing Patrick's idea in Ms. Fine's class)

I gave out the paper and students scattered about the room. I found it interesting that, in this class the students who were more social and stayed in little clusters were the girls. Despite their decision to separate themselves, they stayed on-task.

I noticed, though, when I looked around that Rose, Sarah and Aaron were having large problems writing. They were sitting around and looking at other students writing. Feeling bad, but not surprised at their behavior, I went to each of them and told them to do the best they can. Each of them looked at

me and smiled. It made me sad and yet reminded me that sometimes in trying something new, not everyone will have the same benefits. After class was finished that day, I wondered if I should have interviewed these students because it would allow their true feelings to show because they would not have had to struggle with what to write.

As in Ms. Fine's class, we stopped after they were working on the survey for about ten minutes and reviewed about how to do the second part of the paper. In this class, the students were also very engaged in their writing while the music is playing the first time.

We stopped and I gave the students a minute to catch up with their pictures and stories before going through the second listening. As this is occurring, Tara began to share that this music reminded her of something she saw in a fieldtrip, which made other students join in. Apparently many of them had been affected by this trip and I am curious as to where and when this was. Regardless, I tell them that I am interested but it is time to listen to the song for the second time. They understood and we began the second listening.

The second time the students were just as serious as the first. I, too, was writing my own thing and noticed that the students were not so concerned about what I was writing, as they were before. I found it interesting that it took two months for them to accept that I was going to be writing while they were writing.

One by one, the students finished their stories and turned their sheets over to the front and finish the front. After they finished, they placed their papers on a desk and took a holiday activity sheet to do, so they would not bother their classmates who were still working.

As we were finishing up, Ben apparently could not wait for me to read his story so he came up and told me that this story is like the Titanic movie. While he was doing this, Carl was helping Sue and there was no fighting among them. The interaction between Carl and Sue fascinated me because, in the beginning of the year, these two students would not even look at each other, let alone sit close and help each other.

Additionally, through the whole class that day, I was shocked by the amount of help the student were asking for. They were asking me how to spell things and they are asking all kinds of questions like: *Did they trust me better at this point?* I thought they really trusted me before this point. It made me think that, because of the Drama-in-Education activities, we had now reached a new level of comfort and understanding between each other.

As I looked over their responses, I noticed that the three who were having problems with writing indeed wrote little. In general, their stories and reponses were MUCH better this time.

Erin's work

First time

Survey

12/

Student Survey
M E

Name: ERIN
Date: 1/2/02
Section: NC 6

Part One

DIRECTIONS: CIRCLE ONE ANSWER UNDER EACH SENTENCE.

- 1. I like to answer questions in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- 2. I remember things we learn in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- 3. When we sing songs in music class I understand what they mean.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- 4. I trust the kids in my class.
Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always
- 5. The kids in my class make fun of me for what I say in music class.
Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always



Part Two

1812

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. (The William Tell Overture)

this song reminds me of orchestra and it reminds me of orchestra practice.

ok



This song reminds me of orchestra.

(Go onto the back if you need to)

(Now) Second time

Fill in the following questions.

NAME: Erin

When Mrs. Rhode comes to my room for music class I feel Excited
because... We learn new things.

I think that the new things we are doing in music are fun
because... we get to show our class mates tabl/leav.

My favorite things we have done since the September is Group Drama & Lightbulb
because... we don't have to be quiet to work together

Circle one:
I'm working with my classmates: YES NO SOMETIMES

Why is this so?
because we like talking about our ideas.

Music class is better now than last year? YES NO SOMETIMES

Why is this so?
because we got to sing Fitty Niffy and do fun games.

I understand what the songs we sing mean. YES NO SOMETIMES
Why do you think this is so?
because we say the words of the song and read it and then sing it.

FLIP OVER TO THE BACK-----

Listen to the song and write a story based on what you hear. You are allowed to draw pictures BUT YOU MUST USE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE PICTURE OR PICTURES!

did not have
time but
title the safer

One day a boy and a girl were playing in a garden. The boy was picking flowers and the girl was getting married and got a cell that says her mother told she is. So the girl was this was she is at cliff again comes in a house but he tries to save her but he is too late she jumps and she disappeared in the ground at the bottom.

Jasmine's work

First time

Survey

Student Survey
NAME

Name Jasmine
Date 11-27-12
Section Net

Part One

DIRECTIONS: CIRCLE ONE ANSWER UNDER EACH SENTENCE.

- I like to answer questions in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I remember things we learn in music class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- When we sing songs in music class I understand what they mean.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- I trust the kids in my class.
Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always
- The kids in my class make fun of me for what I say in music class.
Not at all Once in a while Sometimes Always

Part Two

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. (The Williams Tell Questions)

I think that it is someone who was trying to shove
spats in and know they are missing.

good!

(Go onto the back if you need to)

(Now) Second time

Fill in the following questions.

NAME Jasmine u/s + Net

When Mrs. Rhode comes to my room for music class I feel glad
because she is really nice to me and doesn't yell at me.

I think that the new things we are doing in music are like walk light bulb
because we did not do it last year but now we do.

My favorite things we have done since the September is what am I playing
because we get to play and have a movie.

Circle one:
I like working with my classmates: YES NO SOMETIMES
Why is this so? because some are rub and some are not but it is getting better.

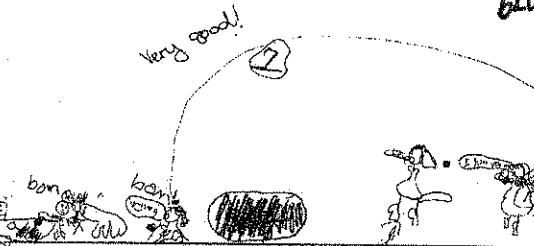
Music class is better now than last year? YES NO SOMETIMES
but now we play, because last year we had to sing sing sing

I understand what the songs we sing mean. YES NO SOMETIMES
Why do you think this is so? because I don't know what have of them mean but I'm getting to now what they mean.

FLIP OVER TO THE BACK----->

Listen to the song and write a story based on what you hear. You are allowed to draw pictures BUT YOU MUST USE WORDS TO DESCRIBE THE PICTURE or PICTURES!

Sad things. girl + girl
got + caught



There was a girl and and there was a girl going after her she called for help she almost got set but a girl jumped on her and the girl saw her when in the grave.
There was a girl who cried for a boy but there was someone at the door with a pony and she what on it and went to a grave and saw her name on a grave on the meson book of his clothes and he was skeleton and she yelled but the skeleton killed her and sunk her in the grave and someone came and then they yelled and then they got set to and that was the last of them.

In Both Classes

Overall, the students were enjoying the activities and felt that they were getting along better with their classmates. Some did mention that they preferred to “work alone” but despite that statement they were doing just fine in the group activities.

In addition, I was interested in the fact that both classes said they liked to do the Walk, Walk Light Bulb activity. Many stated that they enjoyed freezing and interpreting the words from the patriotic songs. They also said that the activity allows them to think deeper about the meaning of each phrase or word in a song. This allowed them the opportunity to make and display their own understanding in their own words in the company of their peers. I decided that because of this response from both classes, I would start to use it in all grade levels, starting next year.

An Encounter with Francis Scott Key

Every year, in November we sing *The Star Spangled Banner*. Usually I tell the story of how the Battle at Fort McHenry came about as well as the outcome that led to the creation of the song. As I had been planning out how I was going to be incorporating more Drama-in-Education activities before the start of this year, I realized that telling the students about the history of *The Star Spangled Banner* was not allowing my students deep interaction with the story, so I deduced that they were having difficulty connecting with the importance of the fact of why *The Star Spangled Banner* is our national anthem.

After having this realization, I began devising a mini unit on *The Star Spangled Banner*. Being that the time for collecting data in this study was coming to a close, I realized that this unit would be the last one to be documented.

The Groundwork

With both classes, I had planned the same things: A reading excerpt about the battle and how the *real* Star Spangled Banner flag had come to be, a group measurement of the size of the true flag up in the cafeteria and then an opportunity to meet Francis Scott Key, played by me. At the outset, I had hoped that we would be able to do all of these things in two 45-minute classes, with the last class being reserved for an interview with Mr. Key and then a discussion about what had transpired. As it frequently occurred in this study, time was not on my side and in that case neither was the weather.

A Discussion first

In Ms. Fine's class, before we worked on our sheet, I finally had the opportunity to converse with the students about their mid-point survey as assemblies and state tests got in the way. I started the conversation by praising them for their efforts in expressing how they felt about what we have been doing. I was also able to have two students verbally share their reasoning for why "Walk, Walk Lightbulb" was their favorite activity. Though most were sitting quietly, trying to construct their statements in their heads before raising their hands, two students eagerly raised their hands.

Bob- "Well miss, we get to freeze into what the words say"

Peter- "Well it's kinda like you get to make up your own snapshot to the words and that helps us to understand what the song's about because we're making up motions in our own way."

Feeling that this part of the conversation was over, I went to the next question:

"I also thought it was interesting that you said you think you learn better from your classmates rather than the teacher. Why is that?"

This took much less time for them to think of an answer, which made me feel that maybe they had stronger opinions about this.

Deb-"Sometimes the kids in my class help me to understand the stuff we learn better."

Peter- “Because they can tell you better than the teacher sometimes.”

Donna “Yeah...like they tell you in kid ways.”

Mrs. Rhode-“Do you mean that sometimes your classmates can explain something to you better than the teacher?”

Peter-“Yeah like that” (*other students nod and make other sounds in the affirmative.*)

At that point, the informal interview was over and it was time for the students to get into groups and work on their general information sheets. In light of the fact that a majority of students in this class were learning support, as were some of the students in Mrs. Neff’s room, I made sure the sheet they were reading was easier to comprehend. They had 15 minutes to read it and five minutes to answer the questions, which were taken right from the reading, word for word.

Though there was excellent teamwork going on, I was disappointed that it took the entire time to finish. Though we had gone five minutes over time, we went over the sheet and then I briefly explained next week’s class to them.

As I was wheeling my cart to the next class, I had the notion that these students should have a video to watch about this because it appeared that, despite my efforts, the reading was still above their level. I dismissed this though after remembering what my one college professor said about setting high expectations for students and decided that the reading was necessary.

Additionally as I left, I thought that the students should have perhaps written down some questions to ask Francis Scott Key when he came to class the following week and I decided to do that with the students in Mrs. Neff's class.

With Neff's class, I did not attempt to interview the students after praising them for their responses, thinking that it would give us more time to work. But I was wrong.

As they were split into groups of three or four, I discovered that these students worked more effectively in groups of three, for the reason that no one in those groups wanted to be the odd person out. In contrast to the great work being done by the groups of three, groups of four had difficulty. When the groups of four were made, they paired off and worked in twos. In addition to this problem, I also noticed that the boys and girls were still not fine with working together, but the cooperation between the two was a bit better because they were not complaining about it to me as I was walking about the room, monitoring their progress. I did not see these problems in Ms. Fine's class, but decided that in the second half of the year, we would continue to do activities that involved developing teamwork in both classes.

With some time remaining at the end of class, the students had the opportunity to ask any questions about the reading and they took advantage of it. I did my best to answer their questions, but some I did not answer and told them that they should ask Francis Scott Key those questions in the following week. That statement fascinated them. Many asked how that meeting would take place because he was dead.

At the end of class, before we wrapped up for the week, I asked them to write three questions that they would want to ask Mr. Key. The students got right to work and turned them in, but they were still curious about what class would be like the following week.

In both classes, the stage for next week was set. They had some background knowledge about the flag and the battle that it was associated with, but were curious as to how they would get to talk with Mr. Key, a deceased man.

Since all of the weathermen on television were talking about snow on the following Friday, I decided to have a combined class with Fine's and Neff's kids for the measuring of the dimensions of the Star Spangled Banner and the interview with F.S. Key.

In order to do this, I had to ask Mr. Torno, the computer teacher in the building if it would be ok with him if we combined classes on Thursday. I told him what I wanted to do and about my research study and he consented. (In our school, all of the Specialist teachers work as a team and are always willing to help each other, which was a good thing in this case.) After this was set, I told both 4th grade teachers to bring their kids up to the cafeteria with something hard to write on and a pencil.

I was excited to see how the two classes would react to the notion of working together. Both of them had been going through the same activities in

music class but never had the opportunity to go through a class together. I wondered, *how would they react to the change?*

Hello, I'm Mr. Key

Mr. Torno and I met the students up in the cafeteria the following week, and I got them into their assigned seats according to class. As the students entered, I noticed that they were conversing with one another and were talking about what they thought was going to happen. We began with a brief review of the information sheet they did the week prior, making sure to ask from both classes so as to not show preference to a specific class. The students from both classes did pretty well and were interested in answering the questions, much to my surprise.

Measuring the flag To lead into the actual measuring of the Star Spangled Banner Flag I asked the final question, "what were the dimensions of the flag?," to which was answered 30 feet by 42 feet. I chose four people to be the four corners and told them to count out the dimensions of the sides of the flag. When they did, I had the other students in both classes stretch out along the perimeter of the flag and then used a string to run the distance of the perimeter so each student could pretend to hold a "piece of the flag."

The students were truly amazed at how big the flag was, as was Mr. Torno. They were gasping with wide-open eyes, and making other sounds that revealed their sudden realization of just how big this flag was.

"Miss Rhode, this is the actual size of the Star Spangled Banner?," asked Frank.

I said “Yes it is.” I then continued to show the size of one of the 15 stars and the width of one of the 15 stripes. They were interested with these things, too. After this, I asked Mr. Torno to help them clean up and get ready to meet Mr. Key and I would “go and get him.” The kids still had no idea how they were going to meet this guy but were giddy with excitement. I quickly ran into the bathroom to get changed.

As I was getting changed, I thought that I should have perhaps talked to the students about how this was going to happen: I would be Mr. Key and they were to accept my new role. Depending on their response today, I decided, would determine how we would go about using the “Teacher In-role” technique.

Here He Is.. As I was getting ready go to into the room I could hear Mr. Torno telling them that they should be asking good questions. He also said that they should treat our guest with complete respect. After that statement I walked through the door in my costume, as Mr. F.S. Key. The second I walked through to door, many students laughed but I was careful to not break character. I expected that some of the students would be reluctant to believe in what was happening and I hoped that they would settle into this temporary imaginary world.

In the role of F.S. Key, I spoke with an English accent and made some small talk about what I would be doing later that day. I encouraged the students to ask questions about that “glorious day” that inspired me to write the *Star Spangled Banner* poem.

At first I got many questions from them that had to do with trying to have me tell them that I was not Mr. Key, but I refused to let them. “You’re Mrs. Rhode, not Mr. Key.” Once they realized that I was not going to slip up, most students got to work and asked questions pertaining to that day.

“Who were you going to save that day?”

“Why didn’t the British soldiers kill you both?”

“What did you write your poem on?”

“How did you get off of the boat?”

“Do you have any kids? How old is your wife?”

In general, Mrs. Neff’s class did a better job at believing everything rather than Ms. Fine’s kids. This fact was something that I totally expected because that has been the case since the beginning: Mrs. Neff’s class progressed faster. However, just because Ms. Fine’s class progressed at a slower rate, did not mean they had failed at this activity. It just proved to me that they were going to need to have another experience with it in order to be more successful.

At the end of the interviewing session when “Mr. Key” left, Mr. Torno told the students to write down what they learned. When I came back in, dressed as myself, I asked the students about their visitor. Many of them said, “It was you miss.” I was determined to not confirm their beliefs and told them that I could not have been Mr. Key because I was over visiting a 1st grade class. As both classes were leaving the cafeteria, some of them said that it was cool to talk to Mr. Key.

Later in the day I saw some of the students in the hallway and some of them called out “That was you this morning,” ”Hey there *Mr. Key.*” and “Hi Francis.” I just looked at them and smiled, not letting them think they had figured it all out. It was a fun activity to do and I think they will remember it for quite some time. It was the first time that they had ever been involved in an activity like that and they did fine.

If there would have been more time in the study, I would have next liked to have some of the students try to take the roles of other people involved with the Star Spangled Banner history.

As I looked at their responses that day, I realized that most of the students had absorbed more from the activity than I thought.

Ms. Fine’s class (feelings, comments & questions)

I liked asking questions to Francis Scott Key. It made me feel excited.

Was the war bad? Did people survive?

I like when you did the part for us.

It was fun.

Did Mary Pickersgill enjoy making the flag?

It will be good if you come again.

How many people were in the war?

I didn’t like it because she got my hopes up and I wanted to see him.

He asked for a piece of paper and he started to write the words.

I can't believe so many people died in that war.

Mrs. Neff's class (feelings, comments & questions)

You even talked like Francis Scott Key.

Did the British have a flag like the United States' flag?

He was pretty inspired when he saw the flag.

He was a great man and he was brave. I bless you. Thank you
again.

Key told me that he was not afraid of the war. It was good to
see him.

It was a great play when s(he) answered the questions.

I learn he save Mr. Bean(s)

Did you like to save Mr. Beans?

Dr. Beans and Francis Scott Key were not hurt and were
gentlemen

The following week when both classes had music, the students were intent on telling me that they knew that I was Francis Scott Key. I found this interesting that they were so intent on telling me this fact. Apparently, it consumed their thoughts through the past seven days and wanted to know why I had said they were going to meet F.S. Key when it was just going to be me. Seeing that this was something they would not let go without explanation, I told them that yes I was F.S. Key and I was pretending to be him so that they would have the experience of what it would be like to talk to a person from the past. Most students in both classes were fine with this explanation and

said that they would like to try it again now that they knew what was going on.

Joey, on the other hand, was not yet Ok with my explanation and said “but if it was *really* Francis Scott Key, he would not have earring holes but he *did!* I saw them. That means it was you, not him.”

Seeing that this really bothered him, I tried to explain, “Well Joey, you’re right. It was me not him last week,” (he smiled like he was proud of his detective skills) “but I was hoping that all of you guys would be able to do was use your imagination and allow yourselves to, for that moment, *believe* that I *really* was him just like you all used your imaginations when we did the other drama activities in class.”

Joey, along with other non-believers in Ms. Fine’s class looked at each other and me and said “Ohhh, I get it” and other things like that. It was that moment that made me realize that if we would have tried this activity again, the students would have done better and would have been more willing to use their imaginations.

That's a Wrap!

The close of the study came much faster than I had thought. We had come so far, but I was still disappointed because I thought that we would have covered more. It was at this point that I realized while using Drama-in-Education activities was very beneficial to the students, it was also very time consuming. If a teacher is not willing to slow down, then drama will not work.

In light of the fact that the following week was the last week before the winter/holiday break, this would be the end of the study. Therefore, they would not be doing the assessment/survey for the final time. Because of this fact, I knew that their wrap-up class had to be carefully planned out.

With both classes, I had intended to run class exactly the same. We were going to come up to the cafeteria, talk about what we had done in music class, watch the i-movie together, and together reflect and discuss what we saw. Due to the fact that again the weather was not going to be cooperative (snow for Friday), I had to have Mrs. Neff's students have their wrap-up class Thursday afternoon after wrapping up with Ms. Fine's class.

In the morning, Ms. Fine's class came up to the cafeteria. When they got there the movie screen and projector was set up. They were looking around, curious as to what was going to happen today.

Mrs Rhode: "Now, I know that you all are wondering why we are up here for music class today. Do you remember when we started in

September with all of the drama activities?" (*Students raise their hands and nod their heads in affirmation*)

Bob: "Yeah, Miss it's fun"

Donna: "Me too, Miss, I like doing the acting stuff"

Peter: "Yeah, because I wanna be an actor when I grow up."

Mrs. Rhode: "Well that's great that you all feel that way. Now, today is the end of my study so you are all up here today to see the video I have made of us when we did the different drama things."

Patrick: "Does that mean we aren't gonna do drama any more Miss?"

Jack: "Aww, man"

Peter: "I hope not cuze I really like it."

Fran, Maria, & Joey : "Yeah me too."

Mrs. Rhode: "Well, what we do from here is really up to you, but we'll talk about that later. Now, I'm gonna get the computer set up to show you the video of you. Just wait patiently please, because this is the first time I have ever done this" (*she goes over to the computer and fidgets with it for a minute*) "Hold on guys. Now....**there**, got it! Ok, here we go."

Narrator: Mrs. Rhode runs over to the side of the cafeteria to turn off the lights and they proceed to watch the video. While they are watching, some students are pointing and laughing. Other students are clapping and the rest are silent. It is clear that all

of the students are mesmerized with seeing themselves on the screen. The video finishes and the students clap.

Mrs. Rhode: “So, I guess by your applause, that means you liked it”

Mary: “That was so great. I saw myself three times!”

Bill: “I thought it stunk. I didn’t see myself once”

Mrs. Rhode: “I’m sure you were all in at least once. You were just not looking hard enough.”

Bill: “Ok then, let’s see it again.”

Mrs. Rhode: “Would you all like to see it again?”

Students: “Yeah, yeah, again!”

Mrs. Rhode: “Ok, one more time”

Narrator: They watch the video for a second time. This time the students are watching to see how many times they see themselves.

Fran: “Hey, Mrs. Rhode, can we show the video to Ms. Fine?”

Patrick: “Yeah! Can we Miss?” (*Other students begin to ask and plead.*)

Mrs. Rhode: “Well, if we can find her we’ll ask her if she would like to come. Maria, can you go down to your classroom and ask her if she would like to come?”

Maria: “Sure, Mrs. Rhode”

Narrator: While Maria is going to get Ms. Fine, the class watches the video one more time. Mrs. Fine enters with Maria as they finish the third viewing. The kids look over and cheer.”

Mrs. Rhode: “Thank you so much for giving us 5 minutes of your time during your planning time Ms. Fine.”

Ms. Fine: “Not a problem Mrs. Rhode. I can’t wait to see the video.”

Narrator: Ms. Fine sits down in the back and several students move to sit by her. As they all watch it is much quieter this time. At the end the students do not clap but rather look at their teacher as Mrs. Rhode turns on the light.

Ms. Fine: “Wow! That was so nice to see pictures of you all working so nicely and not fighting” *(The students smile)*

Mrs. Rhode: “I agree with you. It is a great thing to see”

Ms. Fine: “And, you know” *(to Mrs. Rhode)* “it also looked like they were enjoying themselves while they were learning.”

Narrator: Mrs. Rhode and the students thank Ms. Fine for coming. Ms. Fine leaves and Mrs. Rhode continues with class.

After the final showing of the video, we all sat in a circle in the center of the Cafeteria floor. I asked them five questions: 1. Did you like seeing yourself on TV? 2. What are your thoughts on the drama exercises? Like them? Not really? 3. Favorite drama thing? Should we do it again? Why? 4. What was your least favorite thing? Why? 5. Should we continue to do this until the end of the year? Why?

We proceeded through these questions one at a time, with the students first writing down their answers before discussing them. I found that doing a discussion in this way with Ms. Fine's class allowed them to have a few minutes to think through their answers before verbalizing them.

Ms. Fine's students' ideas

- 12-16-05 Donna Fine 5/05 Jacob Fine 12/15/05 5/05
- Notes
- ① yes because I always want to be on tv. it was so cool.
 - ② I think it makes class better because in 2nd grade we didn't do drama actvys and it's so cool.
 - ③ my favorite drama activity is meeting Francis Soot Key because we got to ask him any questions
 - ④ my least favorite thing was walk. walk lightbulb because it is embarrassing
 - ⑤ yes because drama is fun and I really like these drama things. It helps me learn new cool stuff like doing a slide show.
1. YES I like seeing my self like because I'm a movie star
 2. I like all the thing we did because it make class better
 3. I like walk walk like bulb because when we tablow and walk a round
 4. Songs
 5. yes because its fun and we can tablow and we can do songs and we do that jungle thing and nite after we are finish

Stacey Fine

- ① I love seeing myself on tv because people can see my.
- ② I love doing music because I get to love to pose and it makes class better.
- ③ I love doing walk walk lightbulb because I get to stand still
- ④ Nothing because it's all fun.
- ⑤ I love doing that stuff because it is very fun and I like it so much.

At the end of the day, Mrs. Neff's students came up to the cafeteria to have their final wrap-up session. The students were just as excited to see themselves on the big screen as Ms. Fine's students were. They were also interested to know if we would be continuing to use drama activities in class. I knew at this point that the students in both classes had really liked what we had done and were interested in seeing it not come to an end.

I was surprised that after we watched their video twice, they too were insistent on having their teacher come and watch, so for the second time, I sent a student to go and fetch their teacher. When she came in and sat down, her students also surrounded her and were quietly awaiting her reaction at the end of the video.

Mrs. Neff commented on how wonderful it was that I did something like that for the kids. She also said that she liked how in every picture the students were engaged in the task at hand. Her students agreed with her comments, said that they wanted me to keep taking pictures and show it to them at the end of the year. I agreed and had the students round up for our final reflection/discussion.

As the flurries began to fly outside, and parents began taking their children out of class to go home, we went through the same questions that I had asked the students in Ms. Fine's class. In that conversation I came to the conclusion that both classes had liked most of the Drama-in-Education activities and wished them to continue until the end of the year. It was that

thought which gave me the idea to, in the last final minutes of class, have the students write a letter convincing me to continue or not continue the drama activities in music class (based on their opinions).

Responses of Mrs. Neff's students

Wendy Front

Wendy Back

- Wendy 12-15-05
Neff
1. I thought it was cool and it was fun playing that game and seeing my self. I saw my self on time.
 2. I like the new things I want to keep doing Drama and the new cool games because it's fun.
 3. I like what am I playing because I play the Violin and I know all the instruments and because we all work together and you have to do think of what you're going to do.
 4. Nothing because we do a lot of cool things we do in music!!!
 5. I want to do different Drama stuff because

Tara H Neff

512 We learn different instruments and Remember songs and talk about stuff we don't know and we share our feelings.

Please
Keep
doing
Drama

511

1. Cool I just love how you surprised me.
2. Yes, because I like how everybody see me want I'm think in my head and I like when I share my that
3. walk walk light tube. because I like acting up and the walk walk light tube music and
4. I like every thing no I love everything

5. Yes Please
because I love goma
because I am goma

Looking Back

As I sat at home two days after Christmas, I was thinking about what had happened with the students. I am unable to express my feelings about what has happened any better than I did two weeks after the study concluded.

Final Reflection

12-27-2005

(Excerpt from personal journal)

“After thinking now for a few days about my study, I would have to say that in general it went pretty well. Looking back at my earlier journals I mentioned some things that I really wished I would have tried and most likely will attempt later. When I think about it, the kids really liked doing the drama activities that we *DID* do and will most likely always have a positive reaction towards any other ones. In fact, they were very insistent on having me continue them until the end of the year.”

“It was very tough to do something like this when you only have each class for one 45-minute period a week. When you are on a cart and have to go from room to room, that is a whole other problem to contend with. Despite that problem, I do believe that their passion for the patriotic songs had increased. At this point, they are more willing to explore a song’s meaning and are willing to use acting to get to a clearer understanding.”

“I really think that Ms. Fine’s class benefited from the activities as much as Mrs. Neff’s class, just in different ways. With the exception of a few, Ms. Fine’s class had great difficulty with writing and expressing themselves

on paper. Having them write a story to go with a song has helped to free them from their “writer’s block” and made most of them more willing to take chances in their compositions. . . .”

“I also think that this (Ms. Fine’s) class has improved regarding their attitudes towards one another, at least in music class. Oh, don’t get me wrong, there are times when they are at each other’s throats, but that’s just kids...they’ll do that at times no matter how wonderfully they get along most of the time. I feel that they need to do more group exploration so they can further witness how working together in a group can help them in so many ways. They need to see that group members can give them more power to be heard than when working alone...

“Mrs. Neff’s class was a wonderful group to start with. It is very rare that I get the privilege to have such a class in a school located in a tough part of town. This group could have easily been in any school in America. It was a great mix of abilities.”

“This class has grown in many ways too. They have all grown in their writing and in their willingness to express themselves in front of their peers. I found it wonderful to see that the students towards the end were so willing to compliment and support each other. I was also amazed at their willingness to try all of the new things (drama activities) and give 100% effort. With this class I felt that I have grown closer to them, like we know each other in a different way in addition to the teacher-student relationship that already exists.”

“I very much enjoyed when the students started writing so much that they needed another paper (recalling the last few writing tasks). I found it great when they started taking a greater interest in expressing their feelings for activities we did. This group definitely got the idea that I was not so concerned with the grades they were getting for each response, but that I was looking to see if they could express what they were learning and the questions they still had...”

“It’s not every class I get students interested in the meaning of songs. I think it will be a great thing to see both groups in 5th grade. Will they still understand the meaning of the patriotic songs they sing? Will they remember their 4th grade music class when Mrs. Rhode did all this acting stuff with them? I hope so because right now they can’t stop talking about how fun it is to play in class. I think it’s great because while some of them know it and others don’t, they are not only learning to play again; they are playing to learn.”

Since Then...

After doing all of that work with those two classes and having witnessed so much growth in them in a personal and educational way, it was tough to see them go for the holiday break. I was disappointed that I had not gotten as far in my curriculum as I had initially thought, but was contented in the fact that focusing our musical studies and exploring with the students was a necessary step in their school experience and in enhancing my own teaching.

It was weird to think that while our exploration of music through Drama-in-Education activities would continue, things would be different. Come January, I knew that we would be continuing our studies of the other three families of instruments, but I no longer would be keeping such a detailed journal and retaining their work to analyze.

Additionally, things were very different in mid January because I had a student teacher starting with me and he had to be initiated into our little “circle of trust.” In his first two weeks of being in class with us, he stated to me that he noticed the students in these two rooms were different than in the other two rooms; in these two groups there was a feeling of comfort and security between them as a class and with me as their teacher.

In the next week when we were working on the brass family, I was curious as to how their creative/imaginative writing abilities were coming along because, as previously stated, we were still involving drama in music class and had done no new creative writing based on a piece of music since holiday break.

As a result of this curiosity, I had the students do a free write session to a version of Pachabel Cannon by a brass ensemble. As I read through their compositions, I was truly impressed. (see: Figure: Student Work Since Then)

Figure: Student Work Since Then

one summer day two kids were playing and chasing each other they were running and they found a big valley full of flowers animals and other stuff.

ERIN NEFF

Once a gang of boys were walking Burg. By someone was snuff 2 days later they cremated him. Every body remembering good times that they had together crying without noss everyone so sad. An Angel came.

DONNA FINE

A boy is run from 3 tigers that is trying to eat him then his heart bes fast then there a river the kid made a jump tiger fell in the river and died then there was a fire that he ran from tiger died there was knife on the so he took it and kill the tiger.

JARRED NEFF

A king died and there hating a animal for the king. A little kid is trying not to cry. All of a sudden a meteor hits but its a cruise meteor they will play this piece for ever!

EVAN NEFF

Stop!

Stop! A kid yelled the town was going crazy. Then a meteor shower came and hit them down but they kept playing. boom crash they all got red and blew up. The king came back alive. Ha I got there wallets. To the Mall.

After almost two weeks of holiday break and just three classes back, with no music class writing opportunities, these new pieces soared far above their last ones. It was then that I knew for sure that using Drama-in Education activities was everything that other proponents of drama had said it was. Once the groundwork was laid, everything after that had come in its due time, for both classes.

Methods of Analysis

When analyzing data, there is no one way that is better than the other. Though every researcher takes a different route through their data analysis, it will “almost always lead to a change in the way the researcher sees the original research problem or question” (Ely, 2001. p. 181).

The analysis of the data that I had collected, began almost immediately. Ely, et al. (2001) states that in order to “unfold meanings and truths in the data, (we are required to) reflect on the work that we are engaged.” (p.17). Ely et al. also states that this ongoing process of analysis of the data can do many things such as enabling the researcher to “reconsider or enhance the meaning of your original research question”(p.180).

Codes, Bins, and Themes

Ely et al. (2001) states that when a researcher first begins analyzing her data “it is easy to begin to feel as though they are drowning in the details of the data” (p.181). When I first began looking at the data, I felt like there was just too much data to look at and that I would never be able to effectively sort and separate the information I had gathered. My mentor, at the time, suggested that I just take things one step at a time and allow things to flow naturally.

After I was about half way into my research study, I began looking back at the beginning of my field log. First, I put brackets around my own observer comments so I could keep them separate from actual recorded events and conversations that had been documented(Bogdon & Bilken, 2002).

Next, I began coding my field log entries. As I re-read my entries I gave specific parts of data a label that was placed “in the margins” (Ely et al. 2001p. 162). In most cases, the labels that were assigned were “derived from topics that were introduced in the text.”(Ely et al., 2001, p. 174). For example, any time in my journal when the students positive comments regarding a specific dramatic activity, I wrote, STUDENT POSITIVE, S+, next to it in the margins. Ely et al (2001) calls these “meaning units” (p.162). In order to have an effective list of codes, I had to redo them after an unsuccessful first attempt. (*See Appendix I*)

Thirdly, I took this list of codes and organized them into an alphabetized index and was sure to include the page numbers of where these codes occurred throughout my field log so that I could quickly locate them when I was to write up the findings of my study. Coffey and Atkinson, as restated by Ely et al (2001), say that coding “is condensing the bulk of our data (into) sets (of) analyzable units”(p.165).

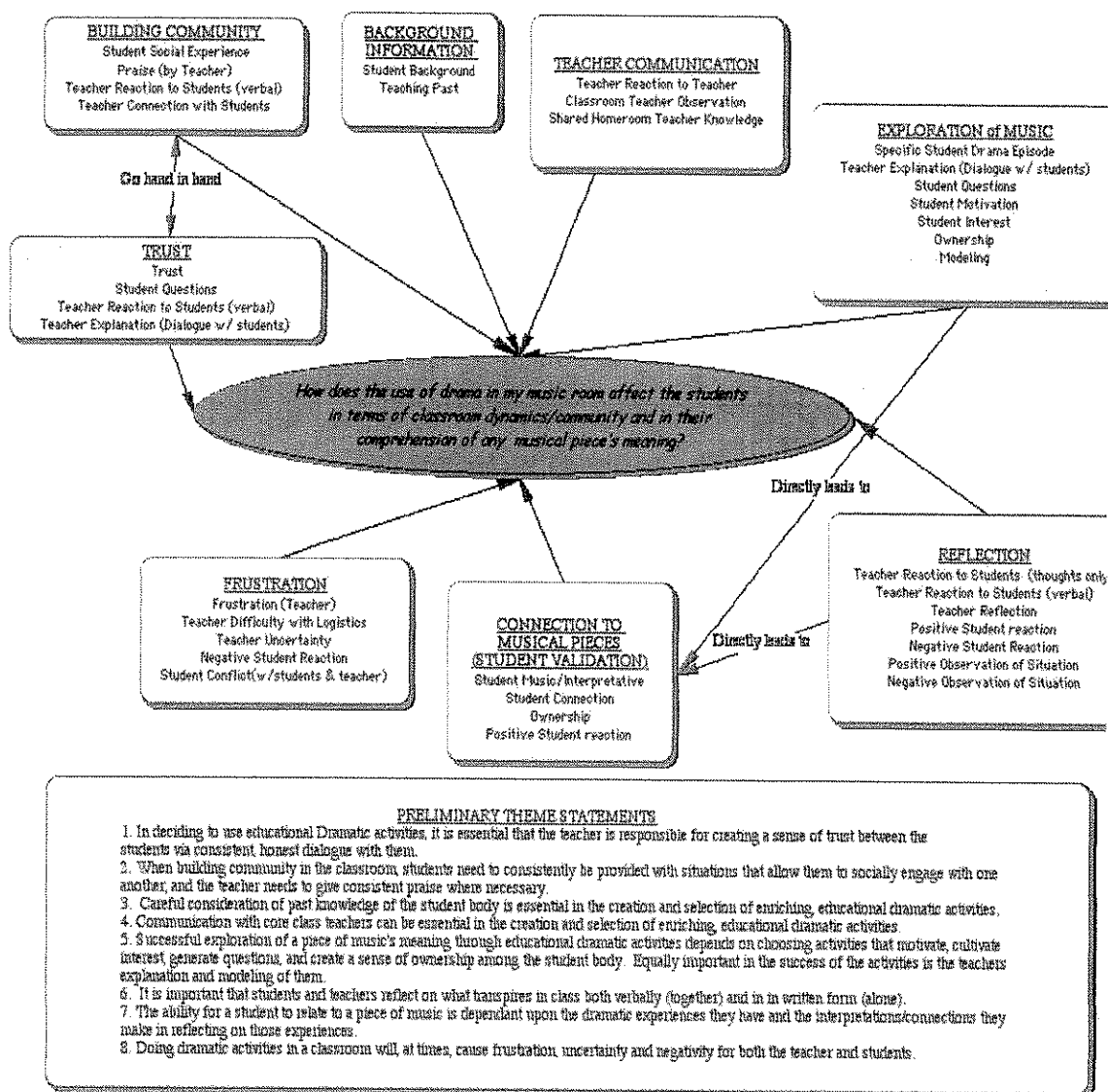
After alphabetizing the codes, I looked at them and began organizing them into “broad” categories that Ely et al. (2001) calls bins. Placing the codes into bins is when a researcher takes the information and puts it into an “initial rough sort” (Ely et al. 2001p. 162).

By the end of this process I had eight bins and was ready to begin the next step, which was the creation of a graphic organizer that showed the relationship between the bins, my questions, and each other (Ely et al. 2001). Doing this is helpful, as Ely et al. (2001) states, because “displays can often

reduce a great deal of data and make it more readily graspable and memorable”(p.194).

From the creation of the graphic organizer, I began to formulate a theme for each bin. Ely et al. states that a theme is “a statement of meaning that runs through all of the most pertinent data.” (p. 206). Just as I had created eight bins, I had also composed eight theme statements, which embodied each bin. (See figure 8)

Figure 8 Bins and Theme Statements



Figurative Language Analysis

In addition to coding my field log, I also looked through it, found metaphors stated by the participants and me, and conducted Figurative Language Analysis of them (Lakehoff & Jackson, 1980). Ely et al. (2001) states that, “metaphors ... are helpful in fleshing out the characterization of the participants in our studies” (p.119)

In this analysis I took each metaphor and : listed it's location in the log, labeled the speaker, and discussed its literal meaning, as well as it's intended meaning. (See figure 9).

Figure 9 *Figurative Language Analysis Excerpt*

p382 L-student response "everytime we do it I get a butterfly feeling"
Speaker - Ben 4-Neff
Intended meaning- When we do this activity Ben gets nervous and excited.
Literal meaning - When we do this activity Ben feels like a butterfly.
Significance of using this figurative language- Ben is most likely relating his experiences with drama to when he is about to ride on a thrilling ride like a roller coaster at an amusement park(when many people experience 'butterflies in the stomach'). It captures his feelings of uneasiness and excitement with the introduction of a dramatic activity in music class.

Looking at various metaphors, in this way, helped me to realize that the students were really feeling positive effects of doing drama in music class. Additionally, this Figurative Language analysis also helped me to see my own contentedness with what had occurred in the study.

Looking at data from various view points

Another way in which to gain insight in to one's research is to look at it through the eyes of another (Arhar, Holly & Kasten, 2001). For my study, I analyzed my data through the perspectives of four educational researchers. As I looked at my study from each of their perspectives, I wrote analytic memos relating certain aspects of my story to their area of thinking. Listed below are the educational authors I read and related certain aspects of my study to:

Dewey (1938)-Traditional Education vs. Progressive Education

Frerie (1970)-Education system through a Socio-Economic Lens

Delpit & Dowdy (2002)- Education through language, race, and ethnicity lenses

Vygotsky (1978)- Education through a Social interactionalist point of view.

In each analytic memo, I linked parts of my study to various quotes from each educational researcher. It helped me to see how their views relate to my teaching views as well as my study with Drama-in-Education activities in a general music class.

FINDINGS

As previously stated, using drama in any classroom allows students to interact with each other and make connections with the content being studied (Swartz, 1995). In my study, I have found that Drama-in-Education activities have allowed the students to *begin* making progress in terms of classroom community and in how they relate to the pieces of music we study. The students have much yet to accomplish in both areas, and were eager to have the activities continue.

Despite these facts, it has been my experience in this study that the key components to having successful exploration of the meaning in musical pieces are of a social nature. That is to say, without a stable, trusting classroom environment, a teacher and her class will not experience the true benefits of Drama-in-Education activities.

The Social Side

Their Past

When selecting appropriate Drama-in-Education activities, it is important to first consider student or participant backgrounds from both an in-school and out-of-school point of view. The facilitator should use her own past knowledge of the students AND any other volunteered information provided from a past teacher or the students or current teacher. Knowing a student's background can help to ensure that activities are chosen with the intent to not tread upon a student's bad memory.

In my study, it was important to consider the students' backgrounds. Being that my school is situated in the poorer end of the city, where I teach, many of the students come from broken homes and have to deal with things like custody battles, extreme poverty, hunger and homelessness. When it comes to the disadvantaged, Frerie (1970) states "so often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy, and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness"(p. 63). In this quote Frerie captures the essence of how disadvantaged children and even their parents feel about themselves. These people are looked down upon and told how horrible they are by those who have more than they do. They hear this so often that they resign themselves to the fact that they are on the low rung of society's ladder, and feel that there is no way to progress upward.

It is no secret that many of our students' parents do not want their children to do better in life than they have done. Several times during my tenure in my building, teachers have had conversations with students who have made it known that they plan on dropping out of school when they get into middle school.

As a teacher of these students, I feel as though I have been fighting a constant battle with many of my students. So often they give up on any activity that we are doing and refuse to even try. Though many students have not actually given a reason for their lack of effort, one student last year did. This one boy just looked at me and said, "Miss, I can't do this, I'm *stupid*."

Judging by the way he emphasized the word, stupid, I could tell that this is how he really felt. He, as Frerie has stated above, *had become convinced of his own unfitness*. His two classroom teachers, as well as the specialist staff, tried very hard to show him that he was not stupid. I do not know if he has a different self-image at present.

Regarding my two research groups, the first assessment and journal assignments were very tough for the students. Many of them got easily frustrated when they were asked to write their opinions and write about what a piece of music made them think of. Though I did the best I could to reassure them that it was ok to be having a tough time with, it helped very little. Many of them sat there looking defeated and convinced of the fact that there was something wrong with them because their minds were blank. It is my assumption that many of them expected to get a bad grade on their paper for their lack of response.

Regarding their first attempt at writing a story to go with a piece of music, Mrs. Neff's class benefited from my observations of Ms. Fine's students the previous day. In Ms. Fine's class, I had the idea to allow the students to draw pictures as they were listening to the piece of music. What gave me the idea to do this was when I observed several of Ms. Fine's students drawing on their papers after they had decided to be finished writing.

I decided to allow Mrs. Neff's class to draw a picture to go with the music first before writing a story. When I mentioned that idea to them, many students sighed with relief and became anxious to start. When I looked at

their responses, I saw that Mrs. Neff's students had been willing to take more risks. This was probably because drawing was a less stressful medium than writing (possibly because of the focus on writing during class that is done in preparation for the PSSA).

Looking back, I realize that if I would have taken a moment to sit down with each homeroom teacher after the first week of school, I would have learned valuable things about both groups of students. Ms. Fine had the majority of students in fourth grade that receives special education services and Mrs. Neff's class had a handful of ESL and special education students. Once I knew these facts, I altered my creative writing activities to include the opportunity to draw pictures. Additionally, I also allowed both classes the time in class to verbally reflect on what had happened that day in music class.

After making these and other changes, the students began to relax and took a more open approach to responding. Currently, the students in both classes frequently have their hands raised and have a strong desire to make their ideas known. It is clear that simply taking their pasts into account when choosing Drama-in-Education activities, I have discovered that the careful selection has helped the students to feel that their opinions have value.

Trust

When a teacher decides to use Drama-in-Education activities, it is essential that she continually works to create a sense of trust between all parties involved through consistent, honest dialogue in conversation with them and between each other. The students need to know that the teacher will be

there to help them through times when the activities become difficult and at the same time, the students need to know that they are going to be supported by their peers regardless of what happens. When this happens, and the group works together with trust as their safety net, “a group intelligence develops that enables some brilliant moments of ensemble play (Drama)”(Kriete, 2002. p.85).

Frerie (1970) also believes that trust is important when seeking to improve the relationship between the students themselves and between the teacher and student:

“Trust is contingent in evidence which one party provides the others of his true concrete intentions: it cannot exist of that party’s words do not coincide with their actions”(p.91).

Here, Frerie is stating that if a teacher wants to earn her students’ trust then she must make statements that she enforces. If she does not do this consistently, the students will not think her statements about anything are true, thusly leading them to being belligerent because of their distrust. Out of all of the quotes I have found that relate to my study, this one not only relates to my study, it also relates to my own upbringing and moral values. From the time I was young my father always told me, “Mean what you say and say what you mean.” It is a statement that I have always tried to live by in life and in my teaching job.

I have always tried my best to be honest with my students. If I feel they can try harder, I tell them. If I think they can sing better, I tell them. In doing this research study with the two fourth grade classes, I feel that it was extremely important that I tried my best to maintain my honesty with them so that their trust in me and in what happened in music class remained pure. In my study, I worked on establishing trust in my responses to their written reflections on the day, and in our casual classroom conversation.

In September when I started having the students respond to what we did in class on paper, I felt as though the first couple of times they were testing me. It was as though they were thinking, "Ok, is she still telling me the truth? Does she really care what we think about what we did in class today?"

I believe that they had their answer after they got their first few responses back with comments from me (and no grades). Each week, I returned their papers and they frantically began looking on them for a grade until they were reminded that I was not grading any responses. It proved to them that I really cared about their opinions and that I was not just making them do needless paperwork for my own needs, or so that I could give them a grade.

By the end of the study, the students were sharing with me their love for reflecting on events in music class because it helped them to make sense of what had just happened as well as allowed them the opportunity to have a kind of one-on-one conversation with me.

As stated above, I also worked on establishing trust during class by making sure that all statements were positive and focused on building each other up rather than tearing each other down. While it was easy keeping tabs on the students' statements in class, I had to really be careful of my own language.

Kohl (2002) states, "casual remarks can be defining moments in (a teacher's) relationship with (his or her) class"(p.151). Here, the writer is talking about how a teacher's non-instructing comments can affect how the students view him or her. Negatively, one insensitive or sarcastic comment can impact the student body so as to create a large rift between you and your students that may or may not be repairable. On the positive side, the few times a teacher jokes around with her students or shares a sensitive moment with them can have the potential to close the gap between the two groups of people.

In my study, I became increasingly aware of this fact regarding casual remarks. Personally, I consider myself to be a very sarcastic person. In my teaching, I am constantly paying attention to these tendencies, as I am aware that one slip-up could affect the students' perceptions of me. If I said something wrong to my two fourth grade classes that are involved with my drama research, their trust in me would be ruined. At that point, the bulk of class would involve me trying to regain their trust. Hence, I was in essence, taking on a role when I was teaching.

After about a month and a half of school, I had a student get into a conflict with me. He was upset that someone was moving his desk back into

position and had dumped out some of the desk contents in the process. Carl yelled and screamed at me and the other boy who had done this, saying that no one should have moved his desk. (I tried to calmly explain to him that Evan was moving his desk because he was not moving it), *like he was supposed to be doing instead of fooling around up in front of the classroom.* This was to no avail and he continued yelling. I then yelled back at him saying that he was not listening to what was being said and told him to get back to his seat and start his journal. Carl's pride was hurt because I yelled, so I didn't expect him to write. It was his way of getting me back for yelling at him and that was ok. Class ended and I went on my way.

When I was grading the students' reflections on class that day, I came to an empty sheet without a name. I knew it was Carl's and decided that I needed to write a letter to him talking about what happened. In this letter I stated that I understand why he was upset and that he had every right to feel that way. Continuing on, I said that he had crossed the line when he yelled back at me a second time. Lastly, I told him that I was disappointed that he didn't write anything because I was sure that he had something to say about how class went that day.

In the following classes, nothing was said of the events that happened before but Carl's behavior and attitude had changed. From that point he was more tolerant of his classmates and of the things that happen in class. Apparently how I handled the situation, with a letter on his journal sheet, has led to a new found respect between us. Since the study has concluded, Carl's

relationships with his fellow classmates still continue to be positive and he is more tolerant of them.

Another instance regarding casual remarks happened one day when I forgot my planning book up in my office. Realizing that I would not be able to get it until after lunch, I asked two students to go to my office and get it. When they left I looked at the rest of the students, apologized for being so forgetful and said that it must be the start of one of those days. At this, some giggled and Ben spoke up. "It's ok Mrs. Rhode. Everyone forgets things once in a while." I thanked him and thought that it may have made him think about a time when he forgot his homework at home one day. Perhaps it made him realize that adults forget things, too.

Regardless of whether it is positive or negative, the comments a teacher makes to her students have a great impact on their relationship with one another.

Building Community

In building community in the classroom, students need to consistently be provided with situations that allow them to socially engage with one another. Vygotsky (1978) too believes that in-group activities "children are capable of doing much more in collective activity or under the guidance of adults"(p.88). Here he states that the key to students' productivity is further enhanced by having an adult present to serve as a facilitator of the activity. In moving through group activities, the students learn how to work together as a unit, hence, building the classroom community.

As part of my study, the students were required to work in groups on various projects like creating mini skits, silent dramatic scenes, and group tableau. In each of these activities, the foundation is various classical music pieces. In each of these group activities, students worked together in order to come up with a product that was often shared with the rest of the class. Though it has been, and will be a life long process, the students have learned how to better work together. In one particular situation both classes were required to do some writing based on a piece of music they listened to. After this, they were put into groups based on what the piece of music made them think of (which meant that they would not be with their friends) and they were asked to create a dramatic episode that combined all of their ideas. Knowing that asking them to do such a thing had potential disaster written all over it; I went around from group to group and monitored the situation. At first the students did bicker a bit as far as what the main idea of their scene would be, but that did not last long. Soon they were gelling in their groups and were focused on the required outcomes. I noticed that it was loud in the room, almost to the point of being too loud, but I was ok with it because as I went around to each group a second and third time they were still on-task and not fooling around. They were engaged in meaningful conversation, not just chitchat.

When it came time to share, I was amazed with how complete their dramas were. I was also impressed with how easy it was for them to choose roles to play and how intent they were at staying in their roles (not breaking

character). Vygotsky (1978) has also spoken to this notion how students will strictly adhere to the rules of play in order to get the most out of the game or activity:

“A child’s greatest self control occurs in play.

Ordinarily a child experiences subordination to rules in the renunciation of something he wants, but here subordination to a rule and renunciation of action in immediate impulse are the means to maximum pleasure”

(p. 99).

Here Vygotsky is talking about how a child, who normally acts on impulse, will exhibit great self-control when he is engaged in imaginary play. Normally a child will feel the need to challenge an adult or parents rules many times. Yet when he is engaged in play, this need to challenge the rules evaporates and is replaced by an inherent need to follow the rules. Lastly, Vygotsky states that the child subconsciously knows that following the rules of the game being played will allow all involved to enjoy the game better.

Outside of school, many students I teach stay inside and play video games because it is too dangerous outside. As a result of this, the students in my building are very argumentative and are ready to fight one another over anything. Also as Vygotsky has stated, the students like to test their teachers’ rules to see if they are going to be consistent when enforcing them. The students are sure to not leave me out of this weekly ritual.

In October I introduced a game to both classes called “What am I playing?” The reason for this game was to introduce the new unit of instruments and families of the musical world to them. I knew that doing such a thing would be difficult for the students because they do not get many opportunities to play games with their peers. First I explained the rules to them (No calling out, no rushing the center person, touch your nose quietly when you know the answer and then switch if the guesser gets the correct answer.) and then it was time to begin. In order for the students to be clear and internalize the rules, I was the person in the center. I pantomimed playing a flute and immediately the students began raising their hands, calling out “I know, I know. Pick me, Pick me”. Knowing that I had just explained the rules and they were caught up in the moment, I did not yell at them for not following the rules. I just looked for a person doing as they were told earlier. When they saw what I was doing, many of the students immediately complied after watching me and other classmates following the rules. I chose one person who was following all of the rules. They guessed the correct answer and the game continued without any problems. Occasionally a few of them would call out but then were quickly reminded by their classmates, who were nicely telling them or they got the hint by looking around.

Reflecting on this moment makes me see that Vygotsky was correct that students would follow the rules of a game without mistake because they know that following the rules will lead to their greatest enjoyment of the activity. I also have found it interesting that the students learned help to guide

their fellow classmates in adhering to the rules for the same reason and learned to do so in a non-confrontational way.

In addition to being provided with socially engaging situations, building a strong classroom community is also necessary for the teacher to give consistent praise where necessary. Kohl (2002) speaks about this need for praise when he is talking about one of his quieter students:

“For Julia, it was not a question of being wrong but never being sure in the presence of a teacher and classmates how you will look and whether you will be humiliated”(p.148).

This quote is about how the student, Julia, is very concerned of how she is viewed by her peers and by her teacher. She wonders if she will be embarrassed as well as if she will be made to look stupid. Julia is not worried about giving the wrong answer; she is worried if she will be teased or made to look stupid.

When I first started the study, the students were very reluctant to offer their opinions about what a song meant to them. It was clear that they, just like Julia, were worried about being made fun of by their classmates. In the first few weeks of school, the students would just look at me when I asked them what the patriotic song, *America*, meant to them. Sometimes if they did have an answer they would put their hand up and put it down before I had the chance to call upon them. Other times, students did everything they could do not make eye contact with me. Being embarrassed consumed their thoughts

so much that they decided that it was best to not say or write anything. In thinking about this situation from another angle, perhaps the words did not, as of yet, carry no meaning for them and their minds were blank.

Additionally, in doing our physical warm up activity, tableau or still images of certain phrases and words in the song, the students were intent on copying each other's still interpretations. When I called out a phrase from the song, the students would at first do their own images and not be concerned about their classmates. This wonderful response quickly changed when I began commenting on the students' tableau choices. As I said "Nice job Allen" or "Great interpretation, John," the other students in the class would slowly change their bodies to mimic the student I had commented on. Even though I tried to comment on as many students as possible, it was clear that these students were so concerned with getting the "right" answer that they would do anything to be a part of the "correct" group of students.

By validating all the students' opinions and interpretations consistently in every class, the students' comfort level with each other had increased. Many students in both classes were now standing their ground in their still image choices for our warm-up activity in each class even when I commented on some students' tableaus. At times when I did not comment on them, a student would walk up to me during the activity and tell me what they were doing. An example of this happened one day when we are doing our warm up to phrases and words from the song America the Beautiful. After commenting on some students' images for the word, beautiful, Allen walked

over to me and said, “Mrs. Rhode, I was holding a box with a diamond ring.” Still another example of this was when we were doing an activity called “What am I playing?” where students pantomime a person playing an instrument of their choice. When Becca was not called upon to do hers, she came up to me while the other students were cleaning up and said, “Hey Mrs. Rhode, what instrument am I playing?” and proceeded to pantomime a harp player.

Also they are willing to take more chances in their journal writing now because they know that when they get it back they will not get a grade, only comments and suggestions. The students have gone from writing one-word answers or one simple sentence to writing two or three sentences. As they became more confident, they were not humiliated by expressing themselves. They felt that their music class had become a safe place where no one would make fun of them for their opinions and ideas.

The last part that I have found helpful in developing a close classroom community is making the students aware that it is not just they who are learning. According to Frerie (1970):

“Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students” (p. 72).

“The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches but one who is himself taught in

dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow.”(p.80)

In many classrooms, including my own at times, there is the distinct separation between the teacher and the learner whereby the teacher teaches and the students learn. Frerie points out that the students and teachers are both continually growing from their interaction with each other; it is not only a one-way street.

In my own experiences with using dramatic learning activities so far, I have found that the students and I are both learning things with each passing day, and while those things are not identical, we are growing in terms of our own understanding. Just as Frerie suggests, we are learning through the dialogue that we have with each other.

I believe that the students in the two classes involved with my study are learning about being comfortable with one another. In October, they were given the opportunity to interpret the meaning of several songs in the form of still poses and acting sequences. I saw progress in their choice of still image interpretations as well as an increased depth to their acting sequences. They began taking more chances and copying each other less, which I interpret as an increased sense of trust and comfort within the group as a whole; an increased sense of classroom community.

In addition to becoming more secure with each other, the students are in the process of learning to be more comfortable with their writing ability and I, in turn, am learning how to better communicate with the students regarding what happened in music class from week to week. This is the *dialogue with students* that Frerie was speaking of.

Before this study began the students had little, if any opportunity to talk with me about what happened in music class. The only time that they had to talk with me about what happened in class was in the hallways and outside as they and I were leaving for home at the end of the day. By having the students reflect in writing, we are able to have a conversation about what happens in class. It allows me to know what they thought of the day and it allows them to know that I am interested in their opinions.

When class runs long and there is not time to have the students write a reflection on class events, we do a verbal reflection, called the Whip. Here the students share their favorite or not so favorite part of class and why they feel that way. By doing this activity, the students are given the chance to communicate their feelings to me as well as their classmates.

With both the journaling and the verbal reflection activity, I have learned that it is important to them that I also reflect on how things went in class that day. I have also discovered that it is important to them that I share at least some of these reflections with the class. In doing so, the students have my responses as examples of how to write about what happened in class that day. Additionally, this sharing experience permits the students to see that I

am taking a genuine interest in what I teach them; that it is not something I do with them and then forget about. Participating in this way, the students allowed me to join each of their classroom communities and become one “of them”, not one “looking in on them.”

As Frerie states, teachers and students learn from each other. Additionally, I believe that it is important for the students to realize that they educate their teachers as well as learn from them.

Process is More Important Than Product

Positive student reaction to dramatic activities requires students to appreciate that the “process” is more important than the end “product.” John Dewey (1939) in his discussion of the benefits of progressive education as opposed to traditional education states, “I take it that the fundamental unity of the newer philosophy is found in the idea that there is an intimate and necessary relation between the process of actual experience and education”(p.20). Here, Dewey is saying that a teacher witnesses the students learning the content being studied (as well as developing other social aspects) as the students are working *through* various projects not when they turn in the finished product.

Regarding my own study with using drama activities in my general music class, I realized that the activities we did in class eventually made them and myself into better people. I also became aware that not every experience was successful and would not be successful as we continued throughout the year. There have been times where both the students and I stumble upon a

difficult spot in the road that we had to overcome. For these students, learning life lessons from their successes had been equally as important as learning from our difficult times or failures.

Understanding what got you to the endpoint makes the final product so wonderful and satisfying. I liken this to when an Olympic athlete finally receives his or her gold medal. Many times that man on the pedestal cries not just because he won but because, in looking back, it validates everything he had to go through to get to that podium. In my study we have had our ups and downs, but I have seen these students working through the various drama-in-education activities with excitement and focus. As a result, with each passing class, the students went from not having any ideas about what a song was about, to being able to make many insightful deductions.

Exploring Meaning in Music

Choosing Activities

Successful exploration of the meaning of a piece of music through Drama-in-Education activities depends on choosing activities that motivate, cultivate interest, generate questions and discussion, and create a sense of ownership among the student body.

In preparing for my study, I read through many books and articles that discussed various Drama-in-Education activities. When a teacher is selecting activities, Dewey (1938) says that,

“The effect of an experience is not borne on its face. It sets a problem to the educator. It is his

business to arrange for the kind of experiences which, while they do not repel the student, but rather engage his activities are, nevertheless, more than immediately enjoyable since they promote having desirable future experiences”

(pg. 27)

Here Dewey is stating that the students have to like the activities in addition to being engaged in learning because of them. If the teacher does not choose carefully, then the students will not be interested in learning and will “shut off.” In deciding what activities to use, I tried to think of how I could use them in my music class. Some of the questions I asked myself were: Will the students be able to further their musical understanding if we do this activity? Does it seem fun? Would I feel comfortable modeling this in front of my students? Does it fit the time constraints or can it be modified? If I could answer yes to all of these questions, it was put on a list of possible activities.

In the beginning of the study, I introduced the Walk, Walk Lightbulb activity to them and they were thrilled by it. Every time I came into the room they would ask if we were going to do it. When I said that we were, the students hooted and hollered like they had just won the big game. Up until that point, there was not much that the students ever really got that enthused about.

Figuring that they were ready for something new after three music classes with the new tableau activity, I decided that they were ready to try an

extension of the activity, which involved them doing their tableau images in groups. The following week (the fourth class) we tried group tableau. It didn't go well at all. The students were not getting along. They were fighting, being bossy with one another, and were complaining how un-fun and boring it was. When it came time to share their images, no one wanted to share and the students became very quiet. I had realized that I had been trying to take control of their drama experience rather than facilitate their learning and forced myself to be their co-pilot, not captain.

In this situation, I learned that what you initially think is going to work might not if you push the students into areas they are not yet ready to try. Perhaps if I would have continued to push them out of their comfort zone in trying to stay with my original plans, the students would have not been as successful as they ended up being and would not have remained enthusiastic about drama being a new part in their music class.

The Teacher's Role

When choosing activities, it is also equally important that the teacher is able to adequately explain and model them. Without this component, it will be difficult for students to be successful to their fullest potential.

I learned this fact as Ms. Fine's class was doing their initial assessment, which asked students to create a story based on listening to the first five minutes of the 1812 Overture by Tchaikovsky. The students were having a difficult time with their writing, but were asking to draw random pictures on the back of the sheet when they were finished the assignment.

This gave me the idea to, next time, have the students draw a picture and write a story. I thought that perhaps drawing would help to unlock their creative writing part of their minds. I allowed Mrs. Neff's class to draw and while their responses were better, I still thought that the students could do better.

In the next writing assignment, the students were again asked to write and draw a story based on yet another piece of music. After thinking about the students' past writing, I had the idea to actually do the assignment myself. In both classes, when I told the students that I too would be writing a story, some of them looked up and smiled at me signaling their approval that I would be doing work just like them. As we were working on our writing, I noticed that, at times, the students were looking at me as if they were checking to see how I was making out. At the end of class when I asked for students to share, no one wanted to be first. To end this awkward moment, I read my story to them. While there were chuckles as I was reading, many students were eager to share their story after I had finished. From that point on whenever I asked the students to do an activity or compose a piece of writing, I joined them, while still maintaining my role as their facilitator.

A potential underlying benefit of modeling what students are to be doing, I have found, is that when everyone was working, there were increasingly less behavior problems. Perhaps the students realize that when *everyone* is working, there is no one to give them attention. The students then put their focus into creating a better quality piece of work.

The Importance of Reflection

It is important that students and teachers reflect on what transpires in class verbally (together) and in written form (self-reflection). Dewey (1938) also feels that students need time to reflect on what happens in class:

“There should be brief intervals of time for quiet reflection provided for even the young. But there are periods of genuine reflection only when they follow after times of more overt action and are used to organize what has been gained in periods of activity in which the hands and other parts of the body beside the brain are used” (p. 63)

Here he is saying that it is important for students of all ages to reflect about what happened earlier in class. He goes on to state that when the students are given this opportunity to reflect, it allows them to sort out what they learned earlier during the class activity.

Vygotsky (1978) would also be in favor for reflective writing because it has a purpose:

“Reading and writing must be something the child needs. If they are used only to write official greetings to the staff or whatever the teacher thinks up, then the exercise will be purely mechanical and may soon bore the child;

his activity will not be manifest in his writing
and his budding personality will not grow”
(p 117).

In this statement, Vygotsky is speaking to the need of practicality in a child's writing assignments. If the teachers only give the students mindless things to read and write, they will get bored, feel unchallenged and unmotivated. He also states that a child will improve in her reading and writing skills if what she reads and writes has value and is viewed as useful to her. Lastly, it is his belief that when a student is intellectually stimulated by what she reads or writes her personality will continue to develop. Hence, writing is much more than merely learning how to correctly shape the letters and words.

In my study I have found that, in both classes, the students have experienced growth regarding their personalities. When I began this study with the students, I found that they were reluctant to write. In my journal I wrote:

9/15/05 (Student reaction to their first experience in writing what a piece of music made them see) Some just wrote anything and then got to drawing on the back.

9/22/05

* explained the journaling to them “It’s your chance to tell me how you really feel about class. I will not share your answer with other students or your

teachers. Kids were very quiet and it seemed as though they did not want to try to do it. They answered it as quickly as possible.

10/27/05 (Informal interview with Ms. Fine regarding her students writing)

She said that they hate writing and that they do the LEAST amount possible because apparently it is too difficult for them to construct anything.

As I went through the beginning of the year, I quickly realized that these students had been doing writing that they felt was not interesting and had little value to them. This was why they were not so interested in what I was asking them to do. They figured that what I was going to ask them to write was not going to be interesting or have any value to them. I rapidly realized that it was my responsibility to show these students that what we were embarking on was a journey worth their while. I also attributed their reluctance to the fact that students did not want to write for fear that they would be graded on their responses and did not want to get a bad mark. After getting the first few responses back with only comments, they knew they were safe to write their true feelings. Later in interviews with both classes, the students stated that they actually liked having time to reflect because it helped them to “get everything straight” and “make sense out of everything.”

Using their imagination in creating a story to go with a pre-selected piece of classical music was another of their activities. When I asked them to do this for the first time, it was very difficult for them. Many of them just gave up and didn't try while others verbally expressed their frustration “But miss, this don't make me think of nothin!” I realized that while these students

saw no benefit in doing this activity, they were still interested in the fact that I was making them do something totally new to them. As we continued to work with this idea, I made this activity worth their while by having the students work with their writing by taking what they wrote and having them create mini dramas from them. When the students had the chance to reflect on this activity, many of them stated that this was a great idea because it was fun and it made them feel like they understood the piece of music in a way they had never experienced before. At present, the students are now more willing to write in this facet and it is because they see the value and worth of the activity.

Making the students see that reflection on what we do each day has required my continued support. It has been necessary for me to share with the students some of the comments and revelations made by some of their classmates. By encouraging them, the students have progressed into seeing the benefit in the activities we do for themselves, without me telling them. In their last reflection entries, many of the students have stated that they understand that the activities are making them better music listeners. In an interview with one student, it was stated that she liked writing about what we did in class each day because it makes her think about what we did and what she learned.

These students have seen the value in writing and have, in turn, developed their personalities as well. Hence, reflective writing has promoted their meta-cognition!

While written reflection is good sometimes, there just is not enough time. If there isn't enough time in class for them to do a brief journal, I still like them to have time to quietly think about what they did in music class that day. Right before I leave their room, I have the class do an activity my one college teacher called "The Whip". In this activity the students are given sometime to think about what they liked about class that day, and they have to be able to say why they liked it. We then go around the room and share, or if there is not enough time, I will choose one table group to do the sharing. By doing this, it allows the students to actively think about what we did that day in class. When students have a time to think about what happened in music class, it gives them a greater ability to recall that information at a later date.

Relating to a Piece of Music Requires...

The ability for a student to relate to a piece of music is dependent upon the dramatic experiences they have and the interpretations/connections they make in reflecting on those pieces. The more opportunities they have to make these connections, the easier it will become for them to see how they can connect to the music we study. Furthermore Frerie (1970) states,

“Students, as they are increasingly posed with problems relating to themselves in the world, will feel increasingly challenged and obligated to respond to that challenge...the resulting comprehension tends to be increasingly critical and thus constantly less alienated” (p. 81).

Here, Frerie is stating his belief that if students are continually challenged to think about the material being taught as it relates to their lives, they will eventually consider it an obligation to continue doing so. Though my students have made vast improvements in the area, most are not to this point yet. It is my desire that they eventually get to that point where they attempt to relate what is being taught in class to areas of their lives.

As of now I have found that the many students have become more focused and interested in what we do in music class. It is encouraging to see the most students taking chances, and then witnessing the 'ah ha' moments that occur.

A prime example of students taking a greater interest in relating themselves to the material being taught, occurred in Ms. Fine's class when the students were doing an activity where they were taking turns pantomiming playing various instruments. It was not going so well. The kids were running up to the student who was working in the middle because they wanted their turn. After I tried several ways to remedy the situation, we came to the end of class and I asked them to do a verbal reflection on the day's events. Many of the students liked the new activity, but some were not happy with how poorly it went. One student went one step further. Allen, after saying that he liked the activity, said "Mrs. Rhode, I think I have a way to make that instrument activity go better." Since I was already two minutes late in getting to the next class, I told him that I was sure his idea was great. Additionally, I told him

that I was late for my next class so he should remember it because I would ask him about it next week.

He remembered what his idea was but regardless of this fact, I was enthralled because it was the first time that a student had indicated that he were actively thinking about what we were doing in class and that he had a desire to make class run better. It is clear that in that moment, Allen was feeling *less alienated* in class just as Frerie stated.

Additionally, the experiences they have with drama need to link together and overlap. “The process is a continuous spiral. The inescapable linkage of the present with the past is a principle whose application is not restricted to a study of history” (Dewey, 1938, p.79). Students should never do an activity just once; they should repeat it several times in order to improve their understanding of the activity and the content that is being covered within it. For a teacher, in order to know how to effectively plan for any class, one has to know what has happened in the past so that the present lesson will allow the students to continue on their learning journey. In continuing with that thought, an educator must constantly be aware of how the planned lesson is going at present so that effective lesson planning can be done for the future.

In my study, the activity that we worked with the most was the warm-up activity “Walk, Walk, Lightbulb.” When we would do this activity in the beginning, many students were unable to come up with original ideas when it came time to do so, and would copy each other’s motions. Initially I was upset but remembered that I too copied my classmates’ images when I first

did this activity. As the weeks passed, the students eventually sought out and did their own original interpretations, this resulted in the students having a better understanding of the patriotic song being studied and the particulars of the activity. We did the activity over and over and we all got better at conveying our true feelings.

Frustration

Doing Drama-in-Education activities in music class will cause times of frustration, uncertainty, and negative attitudes in both the teacher and students.

Teacher Frustration

NEVER are plans set in stone when a teacher decides to use drama in her class. The key to dealing with the frustration is to relax and “just go with it.” As Kohl (2002) states:

“Teaching is a blessedly complex activity which requires complex and continual attunement, and in which the upside downs of topsy-turvy life in the classroom are one of the great joys and privileges of spending a life with children”
(p. 161).

This quote is speaking to the nature of teaching; that to be a teacher is to be constantly evolving how one conducts class. To teach is to never stop trying to find the perfect way to properly engage the students so there is a maximum amount of learning. It is also stated that in this process of “recreating the

wheel” it is important to not get bogged down in the details and snafus along the way. A teacher should enjoy that feeling of never knowing what will happen from one day or minute to next because it may lead to enlightenment in the craft of teaching.

After having taught for six years, I have come to understand that it is important to be prepared for the unexpected. As a teacher, you never know when there is a surprise assembly or a fire drill that may pop up in the week.

Since the beginning of my study this year, there have been plenty of times where I have had to just roll with what happened. The Friday of the Halloween Parade was a perfect example of how I had to adjust my teaching in order to make the class run smoother.

On the day of the Halloween Parade, I walked into Mrs. Neff’s class, totally ready to start the introduction lesson on the instruments of the orchestra. I took one look around and thought to myself, “Ok, well that lesson is out the window.” The students were all dressed in costume and were very anxious about the upcoming events in the afternoon. They were looking at me and doing their best to send me almost telepathic messages about their expectations to sing Halloween songs.

I knew that if I would have ignored their wishes and went on with my original lesson the students would have been upset with me, might have started to lose their trust in me, and may have perhaps become upset that the Drama-in-Education activities were taking away from their holiday fun. I was the music teacher, they wanted to sing Halloween songs, but I wanted to do

drama, so we compromised and did both. That day, the students improvised dramatic skits based on the lyrics and instrumentation of the songs. They had a blast in the process.

While it was a bit unnerving to change my plans for the day, it was beneficial for several reasons. The students had Halloween on the brain and wanted to sing Halloween songs but would have reluctantly done other things that I had planned. By doing what they wanted, it made class run easier. Additionally, while I totally changed plans, it was great because it gave the students their first real chance to work on developing a drama scenario in small groups. This is something that would have not happened had I used the original lesson plan today.

Clearly, being involved in the field of education requires a person who is willing to change her plan on a moment's notice. It also requires her to always be evaluating her practices and methods for educating her students. If a teacher does find herself feeling frustrated in the course of a lesson, she can either try to push through what she planned or try a different approach (that may have to be improvised).

Student Frustration

When doing drama in my music class, the students also became frustrated at various times when we would be trying an activity for the first time. When we were doing the first writing a story from a music piece, students got frustrated and did not write much. In September, when we began the Walk, Walk, Light Bulb activity, some students would not even try to do a

frozen image based on a phrase from our patriotic song of the month. The students exhibited their frustration when they had the opportunity to interview F.S. Key (played by me). They were laughing and trying to convince themselves that it was not F.S. Key by pointing out physical aspects of my character that made me Mrs. Rhode and not F.S. Key.

In each of the cases, I could sense their frustration and discomfort with what we were doing. As the facilitator, I took it as my responsibility to try to ease their minds and release their dissatisfaction in anyway I could. Sometimes I simply reassured them that what they were doing was great. In other instances, I was writing words of encouragement on their reflection sheets. Still, at other times, I decided that a total revision of the lesson was necessary.

Conclusion

Drama works, at least in my case, it did. The students responded to it and learned a great deal about music and themselves in the process, just as I did. Their imaginations had been energized and they began thinking about the underlying meaning in patriotic songs. I learned about being able to “let go” of my need for control and that it is ok to let the students guide the direction of class, within reason. The students liked music class to begin with, but now the students in these two fourth grade classes like it even more because they get to do more than just sing the songs, they get to interact with them.

WHAT NOW?

After learning that drama has a vast amount of benefits, but is not without its difficulties, I am excited to introduce Drama-in-Education activities to other grade levels and lessons. I feel that the rest of my students should have the chance to experience what it is like to exercise their imaginations in music class by using their imaginations.

In general, I plan to do more written reflections with the students in the upper grades (third, fourth and fifth). I am curious to see if they also enjoy reflecting and sharing their opinions about music class. I wonder if it will help them to make sense of what we do in class. I would like each student to keep these thoughts and any other written work we do, in a folder. Then, periodically have the student look back on what they wrote and reflect on how they have grown since the beginning of the year. Perhaps it will allow them to have greater respect for the process of learning. Many of them are unaware that they are gaining knowledge and growing intellectually with each passing day.

Since the younger children in my building are still developing their letter writing technique, I would like to have them reflect in a more verbal sense by doing whips. In this activity, each student has the opportunity to talk about his favorite part of the day. Perhaps the students in these younger grades could do a written reflection through drawing pictures of their favorite thing during the day.

I also plan to have all the grades do warm-ups to help them better comprehend and relate to the various patriotic songs. I think that the Walk, Walk Light Bulb activity could be applicable to all grades, provided they are capable of understanding the concept of tableau. I would also like to explore other warm-ups that could be used with out patriotic song of the month, which is our vocal warm-up.

Additionally, I also would like to work more with having the students try to take on roles of characters we sing about. In this study, I only had time to take on a role of a character. I would like to see how they do with exploring a character by being them and having the opportunity to “walk in their shoes” for a time. Perhaps this opportunity would help them to be more thoughtful about how they treat each other at school.

Lastly, I am excited about attempting to use drama in various lessons in different grades, like perhaps using drama in the 3rd grade form unit, or exploring the rhythm staff through physical interpretation. I am curious to see if using Drama-in-Education activities in these lessons and others will help to enhance the students’ understanding of the music curriculum we study.

While I have many ideas I would like to implement into my curriculum and teaching, I know that there is no way that I will be able to implement them all at once. In my teaching, I have found that it is best to introduce new teaching techniques --one at a time.

CODA

So, as I proceed through the rest of my teaching career, perhaps pushing my teaching cart along from floor to floor (*I really hope not though*), I will be adding more and more Drama-in-Education activities into my ever-evolving music class. This new facet to my curriculum will undoubtedly prove to be beneficial to the students, as both classroom teachers involved with this study have noted that the students' writing has improved across the curriculum.

Perhaps this study will provide some insight as to how music class might be utilized in future years. Instead of cutting the arts, administrators may instead want to work on better integrating them into the daily classroom routine. If the arts die in public education, then we, as a society, face the possible end of creativity and imagination in the generations yet to come. With the arts, students have things to read and write about.

Though I have only been teaching for a short amount of time, I still have many students return to my building to say hello. Additionally, they most always have something to say about something silly or interesting that happened in music class when they were in elementary school. Perhaps these students will reminisce about "all that fun drama stuff" they did and how it helped them to be less shy or instilled in them a drive for learning. Only time will tell.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: HSIRB consent letter



MORAVIAN COLLEGE

September 7, 2005

Melissa Rhode
207 Macungie Avenue
Emmaus, PA 19849

Dear Melissa Rhode:

The Moravian College Human Subjects Internal Review Board has approved your proposal: Drama in Music: What are the reported and observed effects of implementing dramatic play as a learning medium in two 4th grade general music classes? Given the materials submitted, your proposal received an expedited review. A copy of your proposal will remain with the HSIRB Chair.

Please note, however, that the revised portion of the Informed Consent form contains a number of grammatical and spelling errors.

Please also note that if you intend on venturing into other topics than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be.

Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this letter, you must file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB before implementation.

A hard copy of this letter will be sent to you through U.S. mail shortly. If you do not receive the letter by the time you need to begin gathering data, please do not hesitate to contact me. Also, please retain at least one copy of the approval letter for your files. Good luck with the rest of your research.

Debra Wetcher-Hendricks
Chair, Human Subjects Internal Review Board
Moravian College
610-861-1415 (voice)
medwh02@moravian.edu

Appendix B: Principal/Asst. Principal Consent letter

August 30, 2005

Dear Mrs. Santos-Cruz and Ms. Quigney

During the 2005-2006 school year, I will be taking courses towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses will help me stay in touch with the most effective ways of teaching in order to provide the best learning experience for your child.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The focus of my research this year is about what effects drama has on students in music class. The students will be completing what is required of them as usual, but they will additionally be asked to act out things in music class related to musical excerpts they hear of specific songs they sing in class. In doing these dramatic activities, I hope to improve the students ability to create richer writing pieces and I hope to improve their abilities to relate to the materials studied in class on a more personal level. Additionally, and more importantly, I hope that the use of drama will increase the sense of teamwork, otherwise called community, in two of my fourth grade classes. In doing these things, the children will be able to take what they learn with them when they move on to subsequent grades.

This study will take place specifically from August 30, 2005 through December 23, 2005.

As part of my study of the use of drama in the Music classroom, I will be observing the students when they are in the process of creating their dramatic pieces. I plan to have the students reflect on what we do each day in the form of a journal. I will be interviewing students both formally and informally in order to further explore their feelings on drama as it is being used in class. Additionally, the students will be video taped with the sole purpose of providing the students and myself with a visual aid that will be used in a final reflection journal entry and class interview. No one will view the video tapes of the class except the students of that class and myself, the film will be kept in a safe box at my home, and they will be destroyed after the study is finished. Lastly, the students will be asked to complete a brief survey at the beginning, middle, and end of the research period. There are no anticipated risks to the students involved with this study.

All children in my music class will be involved with singing songs and performing on instruments as they usually do. However, participation in any specific drama exercises in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect your child's music grade in any way. If a child chooses to withdraw themselves from any or all of the drama exercises in my study, or the parents choose to not have them be part of this study, I will not use any information pertaining to those children in this study.

All the students names will be kept confidential. No child's name, nor the name of any student, faculty member, cooperating teacher, or cooperating institution will appear in any written report or publication of the study or its findings. Only my name and the names of my sponsoring professors will appear in this study. Minor details of my students' writing may be altered to ensure confidentiality. All research materials will be secured in a protected location.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at 610) 625 -7964 or e-mail at jshosh@moravian.edu.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Melissa A Rhode

I attest that I have read and understand what Mrs. Melissa Rhode's research study is about and therefore I grant permission for Mrs. Rhode's study to take place in two of her 4th grade music classes. I understand that Mrs. Rhode will be observing and collecting data as part of her research on using drama in her music class and give her permission to do so.

Principal's Signature _____

Assistant Principal's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C: Teacher Consent letter

August 30, 2005

Dear Fourth Grade Classroom teacher

During the 2005-2006 school year, I will be taking courses towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses will help me stay in touch with the most effective ways of teaching in order to provide the best learning experience for your child.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The focus of my research this year is about what effects drama has on students in music class. The students will be completing what is required of them as usual, but they will additionally be asked to act out things in music class related to musical excerpts they hear of specific songs they sing in class. In doing these dramatic activities, I hope to improve the students ability to create richer writing pieces and I hope to improve their abilities to relate to the materials studied in class on a more personal level. Additionally, and more importantly, I hope that the use of drama will increase the sense of teamwork, otherwise called community, in two of my fourth grade classes. In doing these things, the children will be able to take what they learn with them when they move on to subsequent grades.

This study will take place specifically from August 30, 2005 through December 23, 2005.

As part of my study of the use of drama in the Music classroom, I will be observing the students when they are in the process of creating their dramatic pieces. I plan to have the students effect on what we do each day in the form of a journal. I will be interviewing students both formally and informally in order to further explore their feelings on drama as it is being used in class. Additionally, the students will be video taped with the sole purpose of providing the students and myself with a visual aid that will be used in a final reflection journal entry and class interview. No one will view the video tapes of the class except the students of that class and myself, the film will be kept in a safe box at my home, and they will be destroyed after the study is finished. Lastly, the student will be asked to complete a brief survey at the beginning, middle, and end of the research period. There are no anticipated risks to the students involved with this study.

All children in my music class will be involved with singing songs and performing on instruments as they usually do. However, participation in any specific drama exercises in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect your child's music grade in any way. If a child chooses to withdraw themselves from any or all of the drama exercises in my study, or the parents choose to have them be part of this study, I will not use any information pertaining to those children in this study.

All the students names will be kept confidential. No child's name, nor the name of any student, faculty member, cooperating teacher, or cooperating institution will appear in any written report or publication of the study or its findings. Only my name and the names of my sponsoring professors will appear in this study. Minor details of my students' writing may be altered to ensure confidentiality. All research materials will be secured in a protected location.

As part of this study I will be formally interviewing you at three times through out the course of the data collection period. While the information you provide may be contained in the reported findings, your name will be kept confidential and minor details of our interviews may need to be altered in order to ensure your anonymity.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at (610) 625-7964 or e-mail at jshosh@moravian.edu. The principal at Donegan Elementary has approved my study and can be reached by phone at (610) 866-1421.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Melissa A Rhode

I attest that I have read and understand what Mrs. Melissa Rhode's research study is about and therefore I grant permission for Mrs. Rhode's study to take place in my 4th grade music classes. I understand that Mrs. Rhode will be observing and collecting data as part of her research on using drama in her music class and give her permission to do so. Additionally I grant permission for Mrs. Rhode to interview me and understand that while the data I provide will be used, my confidentiality will be maintained.

Classroom Teacher's Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix DI: Student/Parent Consent letter English

August 30, 2005

Dear Parents and Guardians,

During the 2005-2006 school year, I will be taking courses towards a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. These courses will help me stay in touch with the most effective ways of teaching in order to provide the best learning experience for your child.

Moravian's program requires that I conduct a systematic study of my own teaching practices. The focus of my research this year is about what effects drama has on students in music class. The students will be completing what is required of them as usual, but they will additionally be asked to act out things in music class related to musical excerpts they hear of specific songs they sing in class. In doing these dramatic activities, I hope to improve your students ability to create richer writing pieces and I hope to improve their abilities to relate to the materials studied in class on a more personal level. Additionally, and more importantly, I hope that the use of drama will increase the sense of teamwork, otherwise called community, in your child's class. In doing these things, your child will be able to take what he / she learns with them when they move on to subsequent grades.

This study will take place specifically from August 30, 2005 through December 23, 2005.

As part of my study of the use of drama in the Music classroom, I will be observing the students when they are in the process of creating their dramatic pieces. I plan to have the students reflect on what we do each day in the form of a journal. I will be interviewing students both formally and informally in order to further explore their feelings on drama as it is being used in class. Additionally, the students will be video taped with the sole purpose of providing the students and myself with a visual aid that will be used in a final reflection journal entry and class interview. No one will view the video tapes of the class except the students of that class and myself, the film will be kept in a safe box at my home, and they will be destroyed after the study is finished. Lastly, the students will be asked to complete a brief survey at the beginning, middle, and end of the research period. There are no anticipated risks to the students involved with this study.

All children in my music class will be involved with singing songs and performing on instruments as they usually do. However, participation in any specific drama exercises in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect your child's music grade in any way. If your child chooses to withdraw themselves from any or all of the drama exercises in my study, or you as the parent or legal guardian choose to not have them be part of this study, I will not use any information pertaining to your child/ children in reporting the findings of this study.

All the students names will be kept confidential. Neither your child's name, nor the name of any student, faculty member, cooperating teacher, or cooperating institution will appear in any written report or publication of the study or its findings. Only my name and the names of my sponsoring professors will appear in this study. Minor details of my students' writing may be altered to ensure confidentiality. All research materials will be secured in a protected location.

My faculty sponsor is Dr. Joseph Shosh. He can be contacted at Moravian College by phone at (610) 625 -7964 or e-mail at jshosh@moravian.edu. The principal at Donegan Elementary has approved my study and can be reached by phone at (610) 866 -1421.

If you have any questions or concerns about my in-class project, please feel free to contact me at school or by e-mail at mogden@bethsd.org. If not, please sign and return the bottom portion of this letter. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Melissa A Rhode

I attest that I am the student's legal guardian and that I have read and understand this consent form and received a copy. I understand that Mrs. Rhode will be observing and collecting data as part of her research on using drama in her music class. My child has permission to participate in her drama study.

Legal guardian/parent Signature: _____

Child's name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D2: Student/Parent Consent letter Spanish

El 30 de agosto del 2005
Queridos padres,

Durante el año 2005-2006 escolar yo voy a empezar a estudiar para recibir un título de instrucción en el colegio de Moravian. Estas clases me van a ayudar a mi para ser la mejor maestra para sus hijos.

El programa de Moravian necesita que yo estudie las practicas que yo uso en mis clases. El foco de mis estudios va ser los effectos que el teatro tiene en los estudiantes en la clase de Musica. Los estudiantes van a completar lo que es necesario para la clase como siempre, pero tambien van a ser una accion de lo que representa las canciones que ellos oyen. En haciendo esto, espero que estas actividades lo va ayudar a ellos en escribiendo y en otras clases tambien. Mas importante, espero que el teatro va ayudarlos a aprender a trabajar juntos, como una comunidad en la clase. Haciendo estas cosas, su hijo/ hija va a poder escojer lo que ellos aprenden para ayudarlos en el futuro.

Este estudio va ser desde el 30 de agosto del 2005 hasta el 23 de diciembre del 2005.

Como parte de este estudio del teatro en la clase de Musica, yo voy a estar observando a los estudiantes durante los varios actividades. Yo quiero que ellos escriben todos los días las cosas que hicimos en un libro. Yo voy a entrevistar a los estudiantes tambien formal, y tambien informal entrevistas. Ultimamente, los estudiantes van a completar unas preguntas al principio, por el medio, y tambien al final de este tiempo. No hay ningunos peligros juntados con este estudio.

Todos los estudiantes en mis clases van a estar cantando canciones y tocando instrumentos como siempre. Participación en este estudio es voluntario y no va afectar al grado de Musica de su hijo/hija in cualquier manera. Su hijo/hija puede terminar el programa al cualquier momento. Si ustedes deciden de sacar a su hijo/hija de este programa ninguna de la informacion de ellos va estar usado para este estudio.

Todos los nombres de los estudiantes que van a participar en este estudio va ser confidencial. Ni el nombre de tu hijo/hija, ni de nign estudiante o maestra va estar puesto en una publicación. Solamente mi nombre y los professors mios van a estar en este estudio. Pequeños detales esten cambiado un poco para estar seguro de que todo este confidencial. Todas las materials van a estar en una locacion protegido.

El professor que me esta asistiendo en etse estudio es el Dr. Joseph Shosh. Puedes contactarlo al colegio de Morvaian 610-861-1482 o tambien jshosh@moravian.edu. La principal de Donegan a aprovido este estudio y puede comunicar con ella a 610-866-1421.

Si tienes algunas preguntas de mi proyecto, por favor llamame al escuela o escíbeme al mogden@bethsd.org. Si no tienes ningunas preguntas por favor devuelve la parte de abajo de esta forma. Muchas gracias por toda su cooperacion en este situacion.

Sinceramente,

Sra. Melissa A. Rhode

Yo soy el guardian legal de este estudiante y yo lei y entiendo esta forma. Yo entiendo que la Señora Rhode va observer y collector informacion para su estudio en su clase de Musica. Mi hijo/hija tiene permission para participar en este estudio teatro.

Firma de guardián legal: _____

Nombre del estudiante: _____

Fecha: _____

Appendix E: Student Survey 1

Survey*(to be administered at the beginning, middle and end of the study)*Student Survey
B M E

Name _____

Date _____

Section _____

Part One**DIRECTIONS:** CIRCLE ONE ANSWER UNDER EACH SENTENCE.

1. I like to answer questions in music class.

Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

2. I remember things we learn in music class.

Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

3. When we sing songs in music class I understand what they mean.

Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

4. I trust the kids in my class.

Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

5. The kids in my class make fun of me for what I say in music class.

Not at all. Once in a while Sometimes Always

Part Two

Listen to the following song and write a story based on it. (The William tell Overture)

(Go onto the back if you need to)

Appendix F: Reflection Sheet 1

Name _____

Section _____

Activity Response Sheet

In Music class today we did...

When we did the activity I liked when we...

I really didn't like it when...

*Appendix G: Reflection Sheet 2*NAME _____ SECTION 4-

Today in music class we did..... (Hoy en la clase de la Música que hicimos)

My Favorite thing we did today was.....(Mi cosa favorita que hicimos era hoy)

Why did you like that? (De ahí que yo lo quisiera...)

Any other comments?

Appendix I: Sample of numbered & coded Field Log

1 he song books. Because it is the last time they will sing america in music class this
2 year I do a wrap up discussion.

3 "So guys, you have been singing this song for a month now. so what is this
4 song about" TE

5 "america"

6 "war"

7 "Liberty"

8 "Pride"

9 "Our country"

10 "fathers dying"

11 "our flag"

12 "justice"

13 "singing"

14 "freedom"

~~15~~ That is an excellent list. now in the last few weeks we have been working
16 with this thing called tableau and walk walk lightbulb. up until now I have been the
17 caller but that is gonna change. one of you will be the caller. hummm...who will it
18 be" TE

19 Many of them raise their hands and I look around. I see that one if
20 the students who is not raising his hand looks fidgety as if he wants to raise his hand
21 but is not. I call on him. TRS

22 Paul, would you like to be the caller?" shakes his head no "are you sure" OSE
23 Shakes his head yes. "OK" (I thought to call in him because he wrote in his
24 response that he liked music class alot. why not give him the chance to be center
25 of attention? guess i was wrong) TR

26 "ok...how about you davon --has his hand raised-- (Tom) is a special OSE
27 education student who sometimes acts out because he does not know what he is
28 really supposed to be doing....really he is a good kid... figure he needs a chance to SS
29 be in the spotlight" be in the spotlight

30 "Yeah miss" S+

31 "Ok here's what you have to do. and you others pay attention because he TE